Labor and Politics in Indonesia

TERI L. CARAWAY
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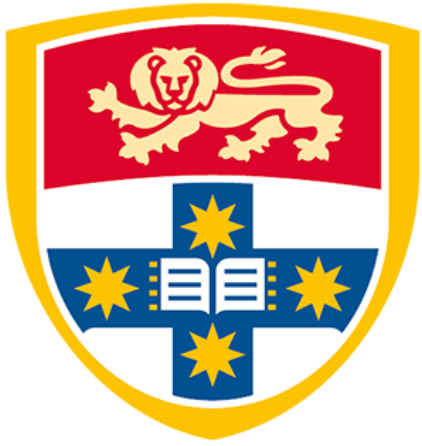

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Labor and Politics in Indonesia

Two decades after Indonesia's transition to democracy, its labor movement has emerged as a vibrant and influential political actor. *Labor and Politics in Indonesia* provides the first in-depth analysis of this development, investigating how a structurally weak labor movement carved out a strategic foothold in a country with no recent history of union engagement in politics. Caraway and Ford show how Indonesia's labor movement achieved many of its goals first through the disruptive power of contentious politics and later by combining street and electoral politics. *Labor and Politics in Indonesia* challenges the dominant theoretical approaches in the study of Indonesian politics, demonstrating how this movement became an active, and surprisingly effective, participant in Indonesia's democracy. Caraway and Ford break new theoretical ground in their analysis of how legacies of authoritarianism, the post-transition political opportunity structure, and the tactical creativity of Indonesia's unions combined to propel Indonesia's labor movement to success.

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Abbreviations

ABM	Workers Challenge Alliance (*Aliansi Buruh Menggugat*)
ACILS	American Center for International Labor Solidarity (later known as the Solidarity Center)
Apindo	Indonesian Employers Association (*Asosiasi Pengusaha Indonesia*)
ARM	Independent People's Alliance (*Aliansi Rakyat Merdeka*)
ASPEK	Association of Indonesian Workers Unions (*Asosiasi Serikat Pekerja Indonesia*)
BIN	National Intelligence Agency (*Badan Intelijen Negara*)
BPJS Kesehatan	Health Social Security Providers (*Badan Penyelenggara Jaminan Sosial Kesehatan*)
BPJS Ketenagakerjaan	Manpower Social Security Providers (*Badan Penyelenggara Jaminan Sosial Ketenagakerjaan*)
BPJS Watch	Social Security Providers Watch (*Badan Pelayanan Jaminan Sosial*)
Depenas	National Wage Council (*Dewan Pengupahan Nasional*)
DPD	Regional Representative Council (*Dewan Perwakilan Daerah*)
DPP	Wage Research Committee (*Dewan Penelitian Pengupahan*)
DPR	People's Representative Council (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat*)
DPRD	Regional People's Representative Council (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah*)

Farkes-Reformasi	Federation of Reformed Pharmacy and Health Workers Unions (*Federasi Serikat Pekerja Farmasi dan Kesehatan-Reformasi*)
FBSI	All-Indonesia Labor Federation (*Federasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia*)
FES	Friedrich Ebert Foundation (*Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung*)
FNPBI	National Front for Indonesian Workers' Struggle (*Front Nasional Perjuangan Buruh Indonesia*)
FPPB	Batang Farmers Forum for Struggle (*Forum Perjuangan Petani Batang*)
FReN	National Assembly Forum (*Forum Rembug Nasional*)
FSBKU	Federation of *Karya Utama* Labor Unions (*Federasi Serikat Buruh Karya Utama*)
FSP BUMN	Federation of State Enterprise Workers Unions (*Federasi Serikat Pekerja Badan Usaha Milik Negara*)
FSP BUMN Bersatu	United Federation of State Enterprise Workers Unions (*Federasi Serikat Pekerja Badan Usaha Milik Negara Bersatu*)
FSP BUMN Strategis	Strategic Federation of State Enterprise Workers Unions (*Federasi Serikat Pekerja Badan Usaha Milik Negara Strategis*)
FSP BUN	Federation of Plantation Workers Unions (*Federasi Serikat Pekerja Perkebunan*)
FSP ISI	Federation of Indonesian Cement Workers Unions (*Federasi Serikat Pekerja Industri Semen Indonesia*)
FSP Kahut	Federation of Wood and Forestry Workers Unions (*Federasi Serikat Pekerja Perkayuan dan Kehutanan*)
FSP Kahutindo	All-Indonesia Federation of Wood, Forestry and General Workers Unions (*Federasi Serikat Pekerja Kayu, Hutan dan Umum Seluruh Indonesia*)
FSP KEP	Federation of Chemical, Energy and Mining, Oil, Gas and General Workers Unions (*Federasi Serikat Pekerja Kimia, Energi, Pertambangan Minyak, Gas Bumi dan Umum*)
FSP KEP-KSPSI	Federation of Chemical, Energy and Mining Workers Unions-KSPSI (*Federasi Serikat Pekerja Kimia, Energi dan Pertambangan-KSPSI*)
FSP LEM	Federation of Metal, Electronics and Machine Workers Unions (*Federasi Serikat Pekerja Logam, Elektronik dan Mesin*)

FSP RTMM	Federation of Cigarette, Tobacco, Food and Drink Workers Unions (*Federasi Serikat Pekerja* Rokok, *Tembakau, Makanan dan Minuman*)
FSP TSK	Federation of Textile, Clothing and Footwear Workers Unions (*Federasi* Serikat *Pekerja* Tekstil, *Sandang dan Kulit*)
FSPM	Independent Workers Union (*Federasi Serikat Pekerja Mandiri*)
FSPMI	Federation of Indonesian Metalworkers Unions (*Federasi Serikat Pekerja Metal Indonesia*)
FSPSI	Federation of All-Indonesia Workers Unions (*Federasi Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia-Reformasi*)
FSPSI-Reformasi	Reformed Federation of All-Indonesia Workers Unions (*Federasi Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia-Reformasi*)
Garteks	Federation of Garment, Handicraft, Textile, Leather and Industrial Center Unions (*Federasi Serikat Buruh Garmen, Kerajinan, Tekstil, Kulit Dan Sentra Industri*)
Gasbiindo	Association of Indonesian Muslim Unions (*Gabungan Serikat Buruh Islam Indonesia*)
Gaspermindo	Association of Independent Indonesian Workers Unions (*Gabungan Serikat Pekerja Merdeka Indonesia*)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
Gebrak	Workers Anti-Corruption Movement (*Gerakan Buruh Anti Korupsi*)
Gemuruh	Workers Mass Movement (*Gerakan Massa Buruh*)
Gerindra	Great Indonesia Movement Party (*Partai Gerakan Indonesia Raya*)
Golkar	Functional Groups (*Golongan Karya*)
GSBI	Association of Independent Labor Unions (*Gabungan Serikat Buruh Independen*)
Hanura	People's Conscience Party (*Partai Hati Nurani Rakyat*)
HIP	Pancasila Industrial Relations (*Hubungan Industrial Pancasila*)
HOSTUM	Eliminate Outsourcing and Reject Cheap Wages (*Hapus Outsourcing, Tolak Upah Murah*)
Hukatan	Federation of Forestry, Plantation and Agricultural Workers Unions (*Federasi Serikat Buruh Kehutanan, Perkebunan dan Pertanian*)

ILF	Indonesian Labor Foundation
ILO	International Labour Organization
Jabsu	North Sumatra Workers Advocacy Network (*Jaringan Advokasi Buruh Sumut*)
Jaburtani	Worker, Farmer and Fisher Division (*Divisi Jaringan Buruh Tani Nelayan*)
Jamsostek	Workers Social Security (*Jaminan Sosial Tenaga Kerja*)
Jas Metal	Metalworkers Network of Knots (*Jaringan Simpul Pekerja Metal*)
KAJS	Action Committee for Social Security Reform (*Komite Aksi Jaminan Sosial*)
KAPB	Committee Against the Oppression of Workers (*Komite Anti Penindasan Buruh*)
KASBI	Congress of the Alliance of Indonesian Labor Unions (*Kongres Aliansi Serikat Buruh Indonesia*), formerly Committee of Indonesian Unions Action (*Komite Aksi Serikat Buruh Indonesia*)
KASM	May 1 Action Committee (*Komite Aksi Satu Mei*)
KBKI	Indonesian People's Labor Union (*Konsentrasi Buruh Kerakyatan Indonesia*)
KBM	Workers' Challenge Coalition (*Koalisi Buruh Menggugat*)
Kepri	Riau Islands Province (*Propinsi Kepulauan Riau*)
KHL	Decent living standard; literally "requirements for a decent standard of living" (*Kebutuhan Hidup Layak*)
KHM	Basic needs standard; literally "minimum subsistence needs" (*Kebutuhan Hidup Minimum*)
Kikes	Federation of Chemical and Health Workers Unions (*Federasi Serikat Buruh Kimia dan Kesehatan*)
KLA	Concept-Lobby-Action (*Konsep-Lobi-Aksi*)
KNGB	Consolidated National Labor Movement (*Konsolidasi Nasional Gerakan Buruh*)
KOBAR	Workers Committee for Reform (*Komite Buruh untuk Reformasi*)
KORPRI	Indonesian Civil Service Corps (*Korps Pegawai Republik Indonesia*)
KPU	Electoral Commission (*Komisi Pemilihan Umum*)
KSBSI	Confederation of Indonesian Prosperous Labor Unions (*Konfederasi Serikat Buruh Sejahtera Indonesia*)

KSPI	Confederation of Indonesian Trade Unions (*Konfederasi Serikat Pekerja Indonesia*)
KSPSI	Confederation of All-Indonesia Workers Unions (*Konfederasi Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia*)
KTP	Identity Card (*Kartu Tanda Penduduk*)
KUI	Federation of Construction, General and Informal Workers Unions (*Federasi Konstruksi, Umum dan Informal*)
LBH Jakarta	Jakarta Legal Aid Bureau (*Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Jakarta*)
LIPS	Sedane Labor Resource Institute (*Lembaga Informasi Perburuhan Sedane*)
LKS Tripnas	National Tripartite Commission (*Lembaga Kerjasama Tripartit Nasional*)
Lomenik	Federation of Metal and Electronics Workers (*Federasi Serikat Buruh Logam, Metal dan Elektronik*)
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPBI	Indonesian Assembly of Workers (*Majelis Pekerja Buruh Indonesia*)
NasDem	National Democratic Party (*Partai Nasional Demokrat*)
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NU	Awakening of Islamic Scholars (*Nahdlatul Ulama*)
Omah Buruh	Workers' House
Omah Tani	Farmers' House
OPSI	All-Indonesia Workers Organization (*Organisasi Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia*)
ORI	Indonesian People's Organization (*Organisasi Rakyat Indonesia*)
PAN	National Mandate Party (*Partai Amanat Nasional*)
Partai Demokrat	Demokrat Party
Partai Keadilan	Justice Party
PBB	Crescent Star Party (*Partai Bulan Bintang*)
PBN	National Labor Party (*Partai Buruh Nasional*)
PBSD	Social Democratic Labor Party (*Partai Buruh Sosial Demokrat*)
PDI	Indonesian Democratic Party (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia*)
PDIP	Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan*)
PDS	Peace and Welfare Party (*Partai Damai Sejahtera*)

PGRI	Indonesian Teachers' Association (*Persatuan Guru Republik Indonesia*)
PKB	National Awakening Party (*Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa*)
PKI	Indonesian Communist Party (*Partai Komunis Indonesia*)
PKPB	Concern for the Nation Party (*Partai Karya Peduli Bangsa*)
PKPI	Indonesian Justice and Unity Party (*Partai Keadilan dan Persatuan Indonesia*)
PKPI	Indonesian Workers Congress Party (*Partai Kongres Pekerja Indonesia*)
PKS	Prosperous Justice Party (*Partai Keadilan Sejahtera*)
PNI	Indonesian National Party (*Partai Nasional Indonesia*)
PPI	Indonesian Workers Party (*Partai Pekerja Indonesia*)
PPMI	Indonesian Muslim Workers' Brotherhood (*Persaudaraan Pekerja Muslim Indonesia*)
PPP	United Development Party (*Partai Persatuan Pembangunan*)
PPPI	Indonesian Employers and Workers Party (*Partai Pengusaha dan Pekerja Indonesia*)
PRD	Democratic People's Party (*Partai Rakyat Demokratik*)
RBSJ	Worker Volunteers for Jokowi (*Relawan Buruh Sahabat Jokowi*)
SARBUMUSI	Indonesian Muslim Workers Union (*Sarikat Buruh Muslimin Indonesia*)
SBMI	Independent Workers Union of Medan (*Serikat Buruh Medan Independen*)
SBMNI	Indonesian Union of Maritime and Marine Workers (*Solidaritas Buruh Maritim dan Nelayan Indonesia*)
SBSI	Indonesian Prosperous Labor Union (*Serikat Buruh Sejahtera Indonesia*)
SBSI 1992	Indonesian Prosperous Labor Union 1992 (*Serikat Buruh Sejahtera Indonesia 1992*)
Segara	Greater Indonesia Workers Movement Central (*Sentral Gerakan Buruh Indonesia Raya*)
Sekber	Joint Union Secretariat (*Sekretariat Bersama Serikat Pekerja Serikat Buruh*)

Serbu Setan	Joint Secretariat for Workers in the Southern Region (*Sekretariat Bersama Pekerja Buruh Bersatu Wilayah Selatan*)
SOBSI	All-Indonesia Central Organization of Workers (*Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia*)
SPAI	Miscellaneous Workers Union (*Serikat Pekerja Aneka Industri*)
SPAMK	Automotive, Machine and Component Workers Union (*Serikat Pekerja Automotif, Mesin dan Komponen*)
SPEE	Electronics and Electrical Workers Union (*Serikat Pekerja Elektronik Elektrik*)
SPN	National Workers Union (*Serikat Pekerja Nasional*)
SPSI	All-Indonesia Workers Union (*Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia*)
SSO	Solidarity Support Organization
Trilayak Rakyat Pekerja	Three Entitlements of Working People
TUMPOC	Trade Union Meeting for Political Consensus
TURC	Trade Union Rights Centre
ULN	Decent National Wage (*Upah Layak Nasional*)
YLBHI	Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation (*Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Indonesia*)

1

Introduction

On 1 May 2014, the most politically dynamic labor center in Indonesia made history. For the first time, an independent union confederation signed a political contract with a presidential candidate. Said Iqbal, the charismatic leader of both the metalworkers union and a major confederation, addressed tens of thousands of workers in Bung Karno Stadium in Indonesia's capital, Jakarta. In a rousing speech that moved seamlessly from statistics to singing, from political analysis to chants of "Long live the workers!", he made his case for supporting presidential candidate Prabowo Subianto. Indonesia was a rich and rapidly developing country, he said, yet only the middle and upper classes had benefited from this growth. He then told the thousands of workers assembled in the stadium that the working class must take action to make its own history and to change this state of affairs. Iqbal explained that Prabowo had agreed to sign a political contract pledging to support ten elements of a "people's economy" that would deliver more to workers. Before turning the stage over to Prabowo, he asked: "Are you ready to fight for Prabowo?" The crowd roared its approval.

The wooing of labor by a serious presidential candidate – much less a business tycoon and former general notorious for his involvement in human rights abuses – was a surprising development for scholars of Indonesian politics.[1] The labor movement has been at best a footnote in accounts that focus on the cartelistic or oligarchic dimensions of the polity and leave little analytic space for economically marginalized groups to influence electoral politics (Hadiz 2010, Robison and Hadiz 2004, Slater 2004, Winters 2011).

[1] Prabowo, President Suharto's former son-in-law, was responsible for the kidnapping of at least twenty-two anti-regime activists in 1997–8, thirteen of whom never reappeared (Mietzner 2014). He is also incredibly rich, with a declared wealth in 2014 of USD 147 million (Aspinall and Mietzner 2014, 352).

Assessments written in the first decade after Suharto's fall in 1998 were decidedly pessimistic about labor's future prospects (Hadiz 2002, Törnquist 2004, Winters 2000). Reflecting on the 1999 elections, one prominent scholar observed that "not only did no major parties try to mobilize workers qua workers, the word '*buruh*' (worker) was scarcely ever mentioned by any political elites during the election campaigns" (Winters 2000, 148–49). Certainly, none would have expected that a major presidential candidate would court labor, let alone so publicly commit to a political contract with a union confederation.

This development would also be a surprise to scholars of comparative labor politics. The labor movement was not a central player in the protests that brought down the dictatorship (Aspinall 1999). As Indonesia's democracy consolidated, it arguably grew even weaker in terms of conventional measures of union strength. Despite new organizing opportunities and the emergence of new unions, unionization rates remained low, and the labor movement was increasingly fragmented into dozens of competing federations and many unaffiliated plant-level organizations. Unions have not made up for their small numbers through effectiveness in collective bargaining; both the coverage and the quality of collective agreements are low (Caraway 2010a, 20). Despite the fact that the independent labor movement's genesis lay in civil society (Ford 2009), unions' ties to other social movements are tenuous, and they do not have strong links to major political parties (Caraway and Ford 2014, Caraway, Ford, and Nugroho 2015). Given these circumstances – low membership density, high fragmentation, low collective bargaining coverage, minimal links to parties and non-labor actors – Indonesia's labor movement should have faded from sight. Its labor movement might well have suffered the fate of labor movements in neighboring Thailand and the Philippines, which have small and fragmented labor movements without ties to electorally powerful parties, and where labor remained on the margins of formal democratic structures (Brown 2003, Hutchison 2015). Instead, it has become the most vibrant and militant in the region.

Prabowo's courting of unions in the 2014 presidential race was a product, at least in part, of the rising prominence and effectiveness of Indonesia's labor movement in the decade and a half after the regime's fall. Following Suharto's resignation, unions took full advantage of the opening of democratic space to engage more freely in contentious politics (Tarrow 1998), mounting raucous and disruptive collective protests in the streets to make their demands heard (Ford 2013, Juliawan 2011). For the first decade, however, the exercise of working-class power through this strategy, which Juliawan (2011) has described as "street-level politics," was primarily defensive. Unions successfully opposed disadvantageous labor law reforms and delayed increases in fuel prices, but these actions, while achieving some important victories for the labor movement, were reactive in nature. This changed in 2009 when they shifted to offense and began to advance a labor agenda. In the years that followed, they secured an expansive new social security law and significant real increases in minimum wages. In a sharp break from decades of apolitical

unionism, some unions also began to probe the electoral arena. Significantly, they did this not by establishing an institutionalized relationship with a single political party or by founding a labor party, but by cutting deals with candidates for executive office, placing legislative candidates in different political parties, and even running candidates for local executive office.

This book tells the story of how Indonesia's small and divided labor movement navigated the political terrain of the post-Suharto period in its struggle to carve out a strategic foothold in Indonesia's democracy. In doing so, it asks and answers a series of interconnected questions in order to make sense of the development of Indonesia's underrated but dynamic labor movement. Why did Indonesia's labor movement follow the unusual path of combining contentious politics in the street with autonomous electoral engagement? How and why was Indonesia's labor movement able to accomplish far more than observers expected? And finally, why have unions been less successful in their electoral engagements than in pursuing their policy goals?

In answering these questions, we show how historical legacies and political institutions created a set of opportunities and constraints that propelled unions into the streets to achieve their policy goals, but initially deterred them from engaging in electoral politics. Despite the fragmentation of the labor movement, unions cooperated across organizational divides at the local and national levels, thus allowing them to achieve many of their policy goals. The geographic concentration of the labor movement around Jakarta and the introduction of functioning minimum wage councils at the local level were instrumental in prompting Indonesia's diverse and divided unions to coalesce into networks that became formidable mobilizing machines that could exert pressure on both national and local governments (Caraway, Ford, and Nguyen 2019). With time, unions shifted to a more offensive posture, forcing governments to respond to their policy demands. They also became more adept at deploying other tactics that complemented mass mobilization. These tactics included engaging more effectively in lobbying and leveraging local elections to win concessions from candidates for executive office.

Unions have had much more limited success in the electoral arena, largely because there are no strongly pro-labor parties, but also because cooperation among unions was weaker and many unions chose not to mobilize their membership for electoral purposes. Those that did engage had to navigate an electoral and party system that presented formidable obstacles to forming and sustaining new parties. They also had to learn how to influence their membership's decisions at the ballot box – a more fraught and complicated endeavor than mobilizing them for demonstrations. Although less influential than street-based mobilizations, these electoral experiments were nevertheless important. Unions convinced aspiring candidates to cultivate working-class votes and, in the process, forced labor issues onto the agenda. Even more significantly, they contributed to the development of a more sophisticated understanding of the

electoral process among their core membership and a more politicized identity among workers – all essential steps in creating a democracy that is more attentive and responsive to the demands of its working-class citizens.

LABOR IN INDONESIA'S DEMOCRACY

Despite comprising a plurality or even a majority of the population around the world, socio-economically disadvantaged groups are usually relegated to the margins of democratic politics. The masses may have the right to participate in politics in procedural democracies, but economic and social inequalities mean that a privileged subset of the population disproportionately influences democratic practice. It has been the work of social movements to narrow this gap between democracy's promise and what it actually delivers. And one of the most important forces in expanding social citizenship in capitalist democracies has been the labor movement (Collier 1999, Collier and Collier 1991, Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens 1992). Historically, labor movements fought for the right to organize in the workplace, to bargain collectively, and for social welfare policies that partially decommodified waged work. They allied with sympathetic parties, or formed their own, to advance working-class interests through parliamentary politics. Where organized labor is strong, the labor movement can close the gap between democracy's promise and democratic practice. Where organized labor is weak, the gap is likely to be especially wide.

Workers as collective actors had made their presence felt from time to time during Suharto's thirty-two year dictatorship – most notably in the strike waves of the early and mid-1990s – but the subterranean organizing and occasional eruptions of protest never amounted to the making of a fully-fledged labor movement (Ford 2009, Hadiz 1997). On the eve of the transition to democracy, the prospects that the labor movement would be able to take advantage of democratic space to advance working-class interests seemed grim. But while Indonesia's labor movement had not played a prominent role in the protests that led to the end of authoritarian rule (Aspinall 1999), they were among the many organizations that began to mobilize more openly and to make demands on those in power after Suharto's fall. As the structures of authoritarian control unraveled, civil society groups that had operated for decades within a narrowly circumscribed political space could organize and mobilize more freely. Like other activists, unionists could now protest with less fear of violence or repression, channel their demands through legislative institutions, and participate actively in electoral politics at the national level and, with decentralization, at the local level as well.

Given unions' low membership density, their internal disarray and organizational divisions, and the marginal role that worker mobilization played in the transition to democracy, it is perhaps unsurprising that most studies of Indonesian politics scarcely mention the labor movement. The absence of labor in contemporary analyses is perhaps most evident in oligarchic theory,

which is one of the most influential lenses for studying Indonesian politics (Ford and Pepinsky 2014). Although subtle differences exist among scholars in this tradition, a central theme is that democracy did not loosen the grip of a small group of affluent individuals – whether it be the super-rich or political bureaucrats – on Indonesian politics (Hadiz 2010, Robison and Hadiz 2004, Winters 2011). These theorists dismiss the accomplishments of Indonesia's labor movement because its actions have not yet posed a serious challenge to oligarchic dominance; in other words, short of a revolution, the labor movement is marginal at best and irrelevant at worst (Caraway and Ford 2014). While acknowledging that democracy creates more space for subaltern actors, they maintain that the real political action takes place among oligarchs who compete vigorously with one another for power. Subaltern actors, including the labor movement, are too fragmented to have much effect, and they face an uphill battle because they must rely on their mobilizational power, which is difficult to sustain, to achieve their goals. Just as labor was on the sidelines of politics under Suharto, for these scholars it remains on the sidelines in a democracy dominated by oligarchs.

Other scholars, though rejecting the oligarchic framework, underplay the role that non-elite actors such as the labor movement have played in contemporary Indonesian politics. While these approaches are often less dismissive of civil society mobilization, social movements remain at the margins. Slater's work, for example, focuses on elite collusion, arguing that political elites form cartels in which they promiscuously share power; this collusion makes them both relatively immune to societal demands and unaccountable to citizens (Slater 2004, Slater and Simmons 2013). Most other scholars emphasize intense inter-elite contention for power, with equally grim consequences for civil society actors. Buehler (2014), for example, argues that bureaucratic elites from the Suharto era continue to dominate local politics, and that subaltern actors only make headway when elite competition forces them to offer something to the masses in hopes of gaining an advantage over a competitor. In the context of competitive elections, candidates may propose general policies, such as healthcare, that benefit many constituents (Aspinall 2014a, Fossati 2016, 2017). But even patronage-centered accounts, which emphasize that candidates must offer voters something in exchange for their support, underplay the role that organized interests such as labor might play in shaping candidate strategies because their primary concern is to explicate how candidates mobilize patronage to win over individual voters in a context in which parties are non-programmatic. The neglect of the role that civil society groups can play in shaping candidate strategies is in part a reflection of them being conceptualized as too atomized and fragmented to break out of the patronage mold (Aspinall 2013, 2014b).

All of these approaches shed important light on fundamental features of Indonesian politics, and their influence on our understanding of the political landscape is apparent in the analysis that follows. But this focus on elite actors has nonetheless led many scholars of Indonesian politics to miss the

quite significant organizing and achievements of subaltern actors since the fall of Suharto. When subaltern actors wrench concessions from elites, it is written off as being a function of inter-elite competition rather than a result of effective social movement mobilization. The result is a skewed picture of Indonesia's democracy that cannot make sense of the increasing influence of the labor movement other than to dismiss it or to claim that its achievements have little to do with collective action by workers. This framing of the problem completely removes from the analysis how and why actors who had been on the sidelines of politics were able to maneuver within Indonesia's democracy to become a force that political candidates might consider to be worth harnessing.

Our contention is not that the labor movement is on the verge of taking power in Indonesia, but rather that these theoretical frameworks cannot make sense of the rising influence of Indonesia's labor movement because they do not create analytic space for subaltern groups, short of revolution, to shape democratic practice in capitalist democracies. Scholars of Indonesian politics are correct that Indonesian workers faced formidable obstacles in making a mark on democratic politics. But since they focus overwhelmingly on the interests of oligarchs or elites, they have underestimated the labor movement's achievements and capabilities. For example, Prabowo's willingness to sign a political contract with unions was not merely a function of a close presidential race. Unions had demonstrated their organizational capacities in the three years prior to the 2014 elections, a period of unprecedented labor mobilization and organizing. During this time, they succeeded in forcing the government to follow through with a long-delayed social security law. They also demonstrated their capacity to disrupt production in economically vital firms, such as the massive Freeport mine in the remote province of West Papua, as well as in key industrial centers. These extremely effective protests shifted the political terrain in workers' favor such that labor could not simply be ignored. Weary of the constant labor unrest and frustrated by the government's responsiveness – or capitulation – to union demands, employers threatened a national lockout if the government did not take action to quell labor protests. They also vowed to withdraw from key tripartite bodies, where they claimed government representatives were siding with workers (*Detik*, 5 November 2012; *Kompas,* 26 December 2012). On the eve of the 2014 elections, then, the labor movement was not only highly visible but also increasingly effective.

INDONESIA'S UNUSUAL PATHWAY

The capacity of Indonesia's labor movement to gain traction in the electoral sphere not only confounds dominant approaches to the study of Indonesian politics, but would also be surprising to scholars of comparative labor politics. The rise of a labor movement that was playing offense and winning – while employers were playing defense and losing – is surprising in the context of contemporary labor scholarship, which presents a bleak picture of declining

influence and power for labor movements as a result of neoliberal globalization. Labor movements in East and Southeast Asia are considered to be in especially dire straits; an eminent scholar included Indonesia in a list of countries in which "organized labor has suffered a steady attenuation of influence" (Deyo 2012, 143). Given this gloomy landscape, it is no accident that one of the most vibrant areas of labor scholarship centers upon the subject of union revitalization (Fairbrother and Yates 2003, Frege and Kelly 2004, Lazar 2017, Luce 2014, Phelan 2007). The cases where unions seem to be bucking the downward trend, or at least holding their own, are analyzed carefully so as to explain the combination of factors that have led to their comparative success (Caraway 2015, Cardoso 2015, Crowley and Stanojevic 2011, Etchemendy 2019, Etchemendy and Collier 2007, Sil 2017).

Indonesia is a particularly unusual case because its unions share few of the characteristics that have made unions influential actors in more advanced democratic settings. Participation in the mass movements that overthrew dictatorships is one factor that scholars have identified as laying the groundwork for highly mobilized labor movements in new democracies. Unions were central actors in the popular mobilizations against authoritarian regimes in many countries (Collier and Mahoney 1997, Koo 2001, Kraus 2007, Ost 1990, Seidman 1994, Valenzuela 1989), and this experience gave labor movements momentum in these new democracies. In countries such as South Africa, Brazil, and Poland, anti-regime mobilizing during the transition was the culmination of years of democratic workplace organizing in which they broadened their concerns beyond the workplace and forged alliances with other anti-regime groups (Ost 1990, Seidman 1994). In other countries such as South Korea, political liberalization opened the floodgates to a surge in organizing activity during the transition, which put the labor movement in a strong position in the early years after democratization (Koo 2001).

Unlike these countries, there was little labor movement activity in Indonesia in the months preceding and following Suharto's resignation. This low level of mobilization in the waning days of the Suharto regime, combined with the legacies of authoritarianism, left Indonesia with an extremely small base of organized workers. The Suharto regime was suspicious and wary of working-class organizations and sought to weaken them – recognizing only one union, the Federation of All-Indonesia Workers Unions (*Federasi Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia*, FSPSI),[2] which was designed to control rather than to empower workers (Ford 1999, Hadiz 1997). Outside this structure, labor non-governmental organizations (NGOs), leftist student groups, and a small number of self-styled alternative unions organized workers and raised awareness of labor abuses in Indonesia's factories (Ford 2009). However, without access to freedom to organize, their capacity to represent workers in the factories and through engagement with policy remained limited (Ford 2009).

[2] For details of the formation and evolution of FSPSI, see Ford (2009).

This situation changed virtually overnight once Indonesia signed onto ILO Convention No. 87 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize less than a month after Suharto resigned. Within months, hundreds of new unions had registered with state authorities (Ford 2000a).[3] Yet despite the opening up of organizing opportunities, unionization rates remained low a decade later – about 2.8 percent of the total workforce or 8.3 percent of the waged and salaried workforce based on the national government's 2010 estimate of union membership (Ditjen PHI and JSK 2010). In addition, membership was distributed across dozens of federations and more than a thousand unaffiliated unions, and many of these unions were not covered by collective bargaining agreements. A 2009 survey of 658 plant-level union leaders in twenty highly industrialized districts found that only 61 percent of them had collective bargaining agreements. Of these, 42 percent merely replicated protections already guaranteed by law and 5 percent included provisions that violated the law (Caraway 2010a, 20). Even among one of Indonesia's strongest locals, the metalworkers union in Bekasi, only 30 percent of its affiliates had concluded collective bargaining agreements (Duncan 2015, 36). On three classic measures of organizational power – union density, concentration, and collective bargaining coverage – Indonesia's unions perform poorly, making the labor movements' rising influence even more puzzling.

In many countries, unions complement their workplace power – or make up for comparatively weak organizational strength – by forming alliances with electorally competitive political parties. Unions and parties in a wide array of democratic countries have formed a mutually beneficial political exchange in which unions deliver working-class votes to their allied parties, and in return, parties give unions input and support on policies that affect their membership (Valenzuela 1992). Through such political alliances, unions extend their power beyond the workplace, receive valuable political support when they confront employers, and become less dependent on militant action to advance working-class interests. In the Global South, close ties between parties and unions have been most prominent in Latin America, where populist parties forged deep links with labor (Burgess 2004, Collier and Collier 1991, Murillo 2001), but such links are also evident in India and some parts of Africa, where many parties have affiliated unions (Adler and Webster 1999, Kraus 2007, Teitelbaum 2010).

[3] The Ministry of Manpower conducted a membership verification in 2005 and found that there were sixty-four federations – half of these were affiliated to one of three key confederations – and 1,237 unaffiliated plant-level unions. By 2010, the number of national federations had increased to ninety – thirty-six of these were affiliated to one of the four confederations – and the number of unaffiliated plant-level unions had dropped to 437. Note that the Ministry of Manpower has been known under a variety of names – e.g., the Department of Manpower, the Department of Manpower and Transmigration, the Ministry of Manpower, and the Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration. For consistency, we use the Ministry of Manpower and the Minister of Manpower throughout this book.

In wealthy democracies, social democratic and left parties have historically forged long-lasting alliances with unions as well (Bartolini 2000).

Partisan alliances are, of course, double-edged. Affiliations to encompassing parties may cause unions to moderate their demands (Teitelbaum 2011), and when unions affiliate to multiple parties, divided loyalties may compromise the advancement of a labor agenda (Sil 2017). From the 1980s onward, labor-based parties in much of Latin America as well as in Poland, South Africa, and some Western European countries proved to be fickle allies, supporting neo-liberal economic reforms that their union partners opposed (Burgess 2004, Gibson 1997, Hartshorn and Sil 2019, Howell, Daley, and Vale 1992, Kitschelt 1994, Murillo 2001, Roberts 2007). Reflecting on Solidarity's shift to the right after the transition to democracy, Ost (2002, 43) has observed that the union's links to the party merely "allowed it to negotiate the terms of its surrender." Elsewhere, however, unions have used their institutionalized relationships with political parties to negotiate some organizational protections even under difficult circumstances (Cook 2007, Paczyńska 2009).

While links to unions do not guarantee that parties will be strong allies for the labor movement, such connections continue to serve an important means through which unions can pursue their political interests. Reinforcing a key finding of earlier scholarship in Western democracies, some recent work has emphasized the importance of links to *left* parties (Huber and Stephens 2001), or of having *leftists at the helm of populist parties*, for winning pro-labor policies in Argentina, Czechoslovakia, and Uruguay (Etchemendy 2019, Sil 2017). In contemporary Indonesia, this avenue has been unavailable to unions. None of the major political parties have a leftist political orientation, and none of Indonesia's multitude of parties with seats in the national legislature had a strong connection to any of the unions; efforts to found an electorally viable labor-based party early in the transition period also failed (Caraway and Ford 2014, Ford 2005).

Based on the experience of labor movements in other countries, then, the ascendance of Indonesia's labor movement since the fall of Suharto is surprising. It has not expanded its influence based on its structural power or its associational power at the point of production (Wright 2000). Nor has it formed enduring partnerships with political parties or relationships with a wider network of community organizations. Rather, it relies on associational power outside the workplace, where a multitude of diverse and divided unions have coalesced into flexible networks that operate as formidable mobilizing machines. This "power in movement" (Tarrow 1998) in the public sphere is both the defining feature of the Indonesian labor movement and the key to its success.

THE ARGUMENT

Why did Indonesia's labor movement combine contentious street politics with autonomous electoral engagement? Our answer to this question combines three elements: authoritarian legacies, changing opportunity structures, and

organizational learning, and unfolds sequentially in three phases. In the first phase, authoritarian legacies and unfavorable political opportunity structures drove unions to rely overwhelmingly on street politics. In the second phase, unions responded to new political opportunities and complemented public protest with more active participation in elections for local executives. The third phase saw unions deepen their electoral engagement by running union candidates for a variety of parties in legislative races while continuing to utilize the tactics developed in earlier phases.

In order to understand the initial choice to invest in street politics, it is necessary to consider the opportunities available to unions in both the workplace and in the political arena. Figure 1.1 outlines how party alliances and the strength of workplace organization and collective bargaining institutions affect the decisions unions make about how to channel their demands. There are three primary ways that unions act to achieve their goals: two are public facing – street politics and party alliances – while the third, collective bargaining, is primarily focused on the workplace. Whether unions rely more on political action or collective bargaining depends largely on the legal framework for industrial relations, the existence of effective collective bargaining institutions, and unions' workplace strength. Where unions have institutionalized access to the polity through an alliance with a strong political party, their political engagement will likely rely more on mobilizing workers at the ballot box rather than on the streets, with the expectation that they can then leverage their partisan allegiances in the legislature. Where they do not have this channel, they must use mass mobilization as a way of influencing policy. Unions usually combine at least two of these three modes of engagement.

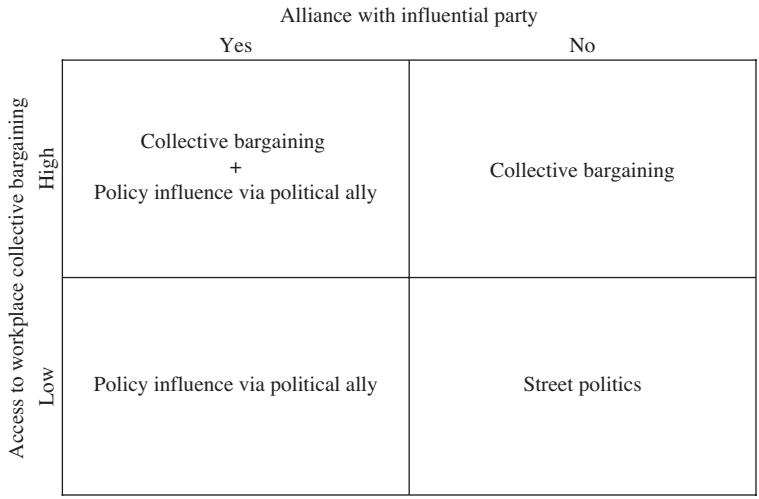

FIGURE 1.1. Predominant modes of engagement for unions.

For example, unions that are in a position to engage successfully in workplace collective bargaining and have an alliance with an influential political party can supplement their collective bargaining gains by channeling broader policy demands through their partisan ally. However, they will lean more heavily on one or the other mode depending on a web of factors including ideology and past practice as well as an assessment of the relative opportunities offered by each.

Unions largely refrained from engaging in electoral politics in the first decade after the fall of Suharto, relying overwhelmingly on street politics to make demands. This initial pathway was driven by authoritarian legacies, the most important of which were the eradication of the left and exclusionary corporatism, the form of labor incorporation in the Suharto years (Ford 1999, 2009, Hadiz 1997). These legacies left unions weak and the institutions of industrial relations unresponsive to labor, driving workers to engage in wildcat actions targeted directly at the state (Kammen 1997).[4] It was also influenced by the absence of a left party, leaving the Indonesian labor movement with no natural allies among the major parties. Without such links, unions are more likely to pursue a militant strategy of confrontational mobilization (Lee 2011). Unions could have worked together to establish an independent labor party. But, here, another authoritarian legacy, economic unionism, meant that most union leaders were reluctant to link their organizations to a political party. This wariness of political parties and the fragmented nature of the labor movement after the transition to democracy confounded early efforts by some labor activists to form a labor party.

But with time, the legacy of apolitical unionism began to erode, in large part due to changes in political institutions at the local level (Figure 1.2). With the introduction of direct elections for local executives in mid-2005, unions suddenly had an unprecedented opportunity to influence local governments, which now played a central role in labor affairs as a result of Indonesia's rapid decentralization process. Most significant was the effect on the local tripartite minimum wage councils, which were far more important than workplace collective bargaining for wage-setting because of unions' weakness in the workplace. Before the advent of direct elections, local executives were selected by the parties in the local legislature. But as direct elections were rolled out from mid-2005 to late 2008, candidates had to campaign directly to voters, and in union-dense areas they often sought to cultivate labor votes. Unions, in turn, began to exploit local elections to win more generous minimum wage increases and other commitments from candidates. Significantly, they did not throw their weight behind a party with national programmatic commitments to labor. Instead, union leaders supported individual local politicians who

[4] This dynamic is also analyzed by Dorothy Solinger (2009) in her comparative study of China, Mexico, and France.

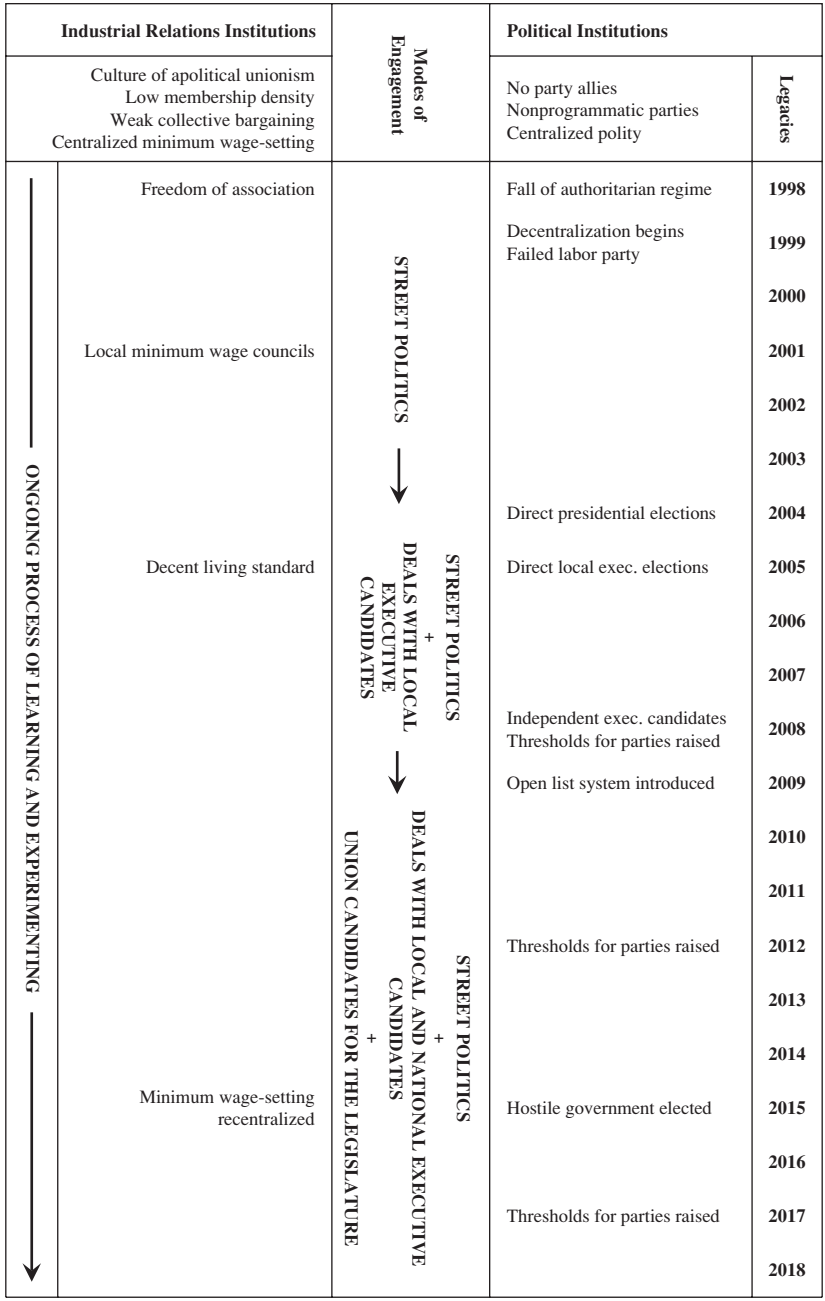

FIGURE 1.2. Opportunities and changing modes of engagement.

signed on to one or more elements of a labor agenda, most often making a commitment to support unions in the wage councils. This strategy allowed unions to retain their political autonomy, and was thus more palatable to labor activists averse to an alliance with a single party. However, this form of electoral engagement also meant that unions continued to depend on mass mobilization to achieve many of their goals.

Once this step of engaging in local executive races had been taken, some of Indonesia's most dynamic unions began to deepen their engagement in electoral politics. The leadership of these unions drew on two lessons from their past experiences, which drove them to experiment further with electoral politics. First, street mobilizations taxed organizational resources. Second, if they wished to shape public policy but reduce their reliance on the politics of disruption, they needed to find another means to influence those who made policy.

Engagement in electoral politics was the method through which they hoped to achieve this end. Unions' capacity to form a labor party had diminished since the early post-Suharto years because of higher hurdles to establishing and sustaining new parties. There was, moreover, little prospect of their cooperating to overcome these obstacles. But the unions could not continue to hold parties at arm's length if they wished to secure seats in the national and local legislatures, as Indonesia's electoral laws did not permit independents to run for legislative office. Hopeful of tapping into labor votes in union-dense areas, a number of political parties had approached prominent union leaders around the time of the 2004 elections (Ford and Tjandra 2007). At that time, none of the major unions had an organizational approach to politics. Five years later, the situation had changed dramatically. Union-backed cadres from two key sectoral federations ran for office under the banners of a wide array of parties. Under this arrangement, unions continued to maintain their political autonomy by eschewing exclusive ties to any particular political party, but they deepened their electoral engagement. Despite its evident challenges, this partnership strategy was again used in 2014 and 2019.

In answering the second question, why has the Indonesian labor movement been surprisingly effective in winning pro-labor policies, we also emphasize evolution over time and learning. In the first decade after the transition to democracy, union mobilization was focused primarily on national issues, and in particular on labor law reform. The labor reform process was centered in Jakarta, where the executive crafted laws and the national legislature approved them. The executive branch also played an important role in issuing the unilateral decrees that were necessary to implement labor laws. Critically, the Jakarta metropolitan area was the primary center of industrial activity. Not only was there significant industrial employment in Jakarta, but the inner ring suburbs of Bekasi, Bogor, Depok, and Tangerang also had substantial manufacturing employment. Beyond this inner ring were Karawang, Cilegon, and Serang, all less than two hours, and Bandung and Cimahi, less than four hours, from Jakarta. Through Jakarta-centered coalitions that brought

a variety of unions together and through their federation structures, unions could flood the capital with a huge number of workers to demonstrate for or against labor legislation and regulations. At this time, the national political opportunity structure was favorable, as the executive needed to secure the legislature's support to put the overarching legal framework governing labor relations in place. If workers could mobilize sufficient numbers, unions could raise the cost to the government of pushing through the reforms. These defensive mobilizations, in which unions responded to initiatives from the executive, were successful in derailing laws and regulations that unions opposed.

During this first decade after democratization, unions were far less effective in winning gains from local governments. Most importantly, they had difficulty persuading local executives to approve large minimum wage increases. The most obvious indicator of this failure is that wage increases were no larger in industrial areas, where unions were stronger and had formed local union networks around the annual minimum wage negotiations, than in non-industrial areas. The main reason for this is that indirectly elected local executives had little incentive to respond to worker demands. But once direct elections were introduced, unions began to leverage the electoral vulnerability of incumbents to win larger minimum wage increases. Strengthening their cooperation at the local level, unions began to adopt a more offensive posture. As they learned how to manipulate election cycles and inter-jurisdictional wage dynamics, they began to win more generous wage increases. At the national level, too, unions began to develop a wider repertoire of tactics, most notably in the case of the social security law, where unions complemented mobilization in the streets with lobbying, lawsuits, and legislative monitoring. This combination of tactics allowed unions to play an important role in winning passage of a new social security law that the nation's popular president opposed, as well as to secure important new regulations from the executive on minimum wages and outsourcing.

Finally, why have unions been less successful in the electoral arena than in the policy arena? The requirement that parties have national reach, combined with the patchy geographical spread of secondary industry and low union density outside manufacturing has made it difficult for unions to exercise their political muscle. The electoral math seldom made it possible for a single union to win a seat in a local legislature based solely on the support of its own members and, even in the rare cases where this was possible, the total number of seats that could be won was small. Another important factor has been the failure of Indonesia's fragmented unions to establish a joint political strategy. In the policy arena, unions could overcome their divisions because the policy victories were public goods that would be shared by members of all unions. But in the electoral arena, unions seldom backed candidates from other unions, as elected office was perceived to be a private good that would be controlled by a rival union. Coalition-building was hard enough in executive races – while they might cooperate to back an executive candidate

without a labor background, they found it harder to come together behind an actual labor candidate. The challenge was even greater in legislative races, where union candidates were often pitted against each other. Without a unifying labor party to bring them together across organizational lines, unions marched to the beat of their own drums.

If measured by races won, then, unions' attempts to secure representation in Indonesia's legislative bodies have not been nearly as successful as their engagement in the policy arena. But as a consequence of their direct participation in electoral politics, unions developed a more sophisticated understanding of the electoral process, and fostered a more politicized identity among workers. The shift from an exclusive focus on street politics to one combining street politics with autonomous forms of electoral engagement has also resulted in candidates making stronger programmatic commitments on labor issues. After years of neglect, gaining such recognition is a significant accomplishment.

RESEARCH SITES AND METHODS

In order to answer our research questions, we utilized several different methods. We conducted primary fieldwork in Jakarta, where we interviewed national leaders from union federations and confederations and collected primary documents from them and the national government. In addition, we selected five union-dense localities in five different provinces to study closely. In each of these localities, we engaged in observational fieldwork, attending union meetings and other events and activities including training sessions and discussions with grassroots members. In addition, we conducted 228 semi-structured interviews with union leaders and politicians between 2012 and 2019, as well as drawing on data collected in interviews conducted by each of us while working on earlier labor-related projects in these and other industrial localities. We supplemented these primary materials with newspaper reports from local and national media. We also collected electoral data from the Indonesian Election Commission (*Komisi Pemilihan Umum*), both at the national and local levels, and minimum wage data from online sources. In addition, we conducted a survey of working class voters (N = 1200) in Tangerang and Bekasi after the 2009 and 2014 elections, in collaboration with a team from the University of Indonesia. These survey data allowed us to assess the extent to which unions effectively mobilized their members during elections, and whether workers were beginning to develop a more politicized working-class identity.

Indonesia has 34 provinces and more than 500 districts and municipalities. Around two dozen or so of these districts and municipalities are industrial centers. We selected five centers for closer scrutiny. Three are in Java – Bekasi and Tangerang in the Greater Jakarta area, and Gresik in East Java near Surabaya, Indonesia's second-largest city (Figure 1.3).

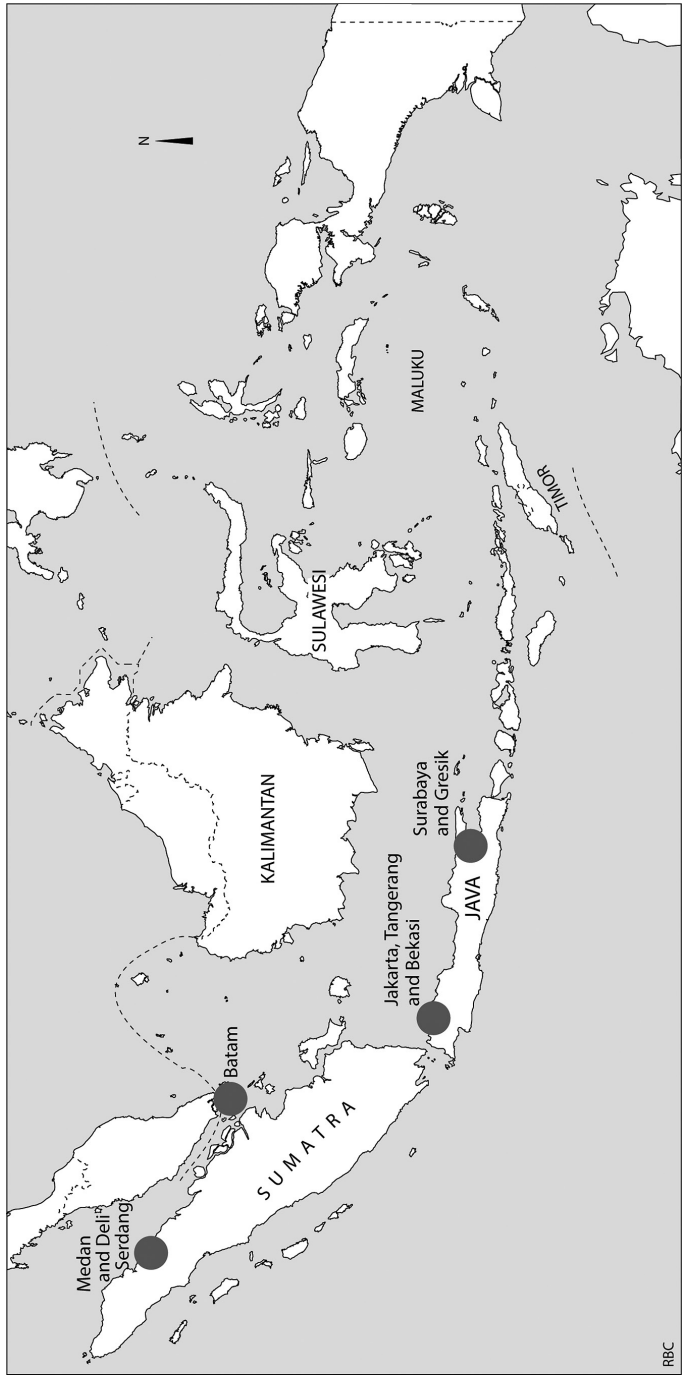

FIGURE 1.3. Research sites.

The remaining two are located in Sumatra. Deli Serdang is an industrial district on the outskirts of Medan, Indonesia's third-largest city, and the provincial capital of North Sumatra. The final location is the island of Batam, a free trade zone located off the east coast of Sumatra just south of Singapore and Malaysia.

Several factors drove our selection of these field sites. The first criterion was a large manufacturing base. Union membership is concentrated in manufacturing, so these are the set of localities where the labor movement is most likely to mobilize and play a role in politics. Among the two dozen or so localities with significant manufacturing, we took into account two other factors to narrow our case selection further. First, we aimed to select cases that varied in terms of the dominant industry. By doing so, we could take into account (or rule out) whether these differences in the dominant industries (e.g., labor-intensive vs. capital-intensive) can explain differences across our cases. In addition, the prevailing industry strongly affects the union landscape, since many unions focus their organizing in specific subsectors. Unions, in turn, differ in the form and intensity of their political engagement, and incorporating industrial variation into our case selection also allowed us to consider a variety of unions in our analysis. Second, the set of dominant political parties varies considerably across provinces. We, therefore, chose field sites in five different provinces so that we could assess whether the dominance of certain parties might affect the opportunities for union engagement and success at the local level.

By attending to these sources of variation at the local level, we were able to evaluate how differences in terms of the dominant industry, unions, and political parties across our cases shaped the form and the success of labor engagement in politics. Below, we provide further details about the variation among our cases in the three areas that guided our case selection: manufacturing base, political context, and union landscape.

Economic Context

Indonesia is by far the largest economy in Southeast Asia, accounting for around 37 percent of the region's GDP in 2017 (World Bank 2019c). This vast archipelago is characterized by a diverse and highly differentiated political economy, ranging from the subsistence agriculture in much of the impoverished East, to the resource-dependent economies of Kalimantan and Sumatra, to the relatively small island of Java, which is home to the bulk of its manufacturing activity. Its economy is sustained by a labor force of 121 million (BPS 2017a), around 61 million of whom are in waged employment (BPS 2017a). Around 17 million are engaged in manufacturing, of whom around 11.6 million are in waged work (BPS 2018b). While by no means the most unequal society in the world, or even in Asia, it is highly unequal, with a Gini co-efficient of just 0.40 (BPS 2018d). A national open unemployment rate of 5.34 percent masks significant variation between provinces, from a low of 1.37 percent

in Bali to a high of 8.17 percent in the relatively industrialized province of West Java (BPS 2018a, 2018c).[5] As in many comparable countries, Indonesia has a large informal sector; indeed, around 70 percent of the workforce is engaged in informal sector work.[6]

Our five field sites are among the most manufacturing-dense locations in the country. However, the products manufactured and the importance of manufacturing in terms of its contribution to local GDP and as a source of employment are different for each of the five sites (Table 1.1). Gresik was the first of our field sites to emerge as an industrial zone, when Indonesia's largest cement company was established there in the 1960s. The following decade saw a level of diversification, with a focus on petrochemicals and plastics (Spencer et al. 2008). Today, manufacturing in the district is dominated by the production of chemicals and pharmaceuticals, food and beverages, and wood products (BPS Kabupaten Gresik 2018). Deli Serdang has also long been an industrial area, having established a diverse light manufacturing base, which included garments and textiles as well as rubber and plastics, in the late 1960s (Leinbach 1987). Much of the garment industry has since relocated to Java, and the district now primarily produces food and beverages and rubber products (BPS Kabupaten Deli Serdang 2015).

Tangerang and Bekasi – both in Greater Jakarta – were the next to emerge, following the establishment of toll roads to the capital in the 1980s (Firman and Dharmapatni 1995). Both, initially destinations for polluting and labor-intensive industries, over time have experienced a degree of differentiation. Tangerang municipality and Tangerang district remain centers of relatively low-tech, labor-intensive industries, most notably textiles, clothing, and footwear. Bekasi district, by contrast, now focuses on electronics, machinery, and transportation equipment (BPS 2017b). Batam, our final field site, has been classified as an industrial zone since the 1970s, though its first industrial park opened only in 1992 (Aritenang 2017, van Grunsven and Hutchinson 2017). Its key manufacturing outputs are electronics and other fabricated metals (BPS Kota Batam 2016).

As shown in Table 1.1, manufacturing is also an important source of employment in each of the field sites, though there is significant variation in the total number of people employed. The proportion of males and females working in manufacturing is also different, depending on the predominant sub-sectors in each area. Thus, a relatively high proportion of women work in manufacturing relative to men in Tangerang District, where there are large garment and footwear factories, and in Bekasi and Batam, both home to consumer electronics factories compared to Deli Serdang and Gresik, where the manufacturing workforce is predominantly male.

[5] Unemployment rates are artificially low because of low levels of labor market participation and high levels of underemployment.

[6] This estimation uses the definition used by the International Labour Organization (ILO). For discussion on the difficulties of measuring informality in Indonesia, see Lews (2018) and Rothenberg et al. (2016).

TABLE 1.1. *Industrial and labor market profile, 2017*

Field Site	Dominant Non-Oil and Gas Manufacturing Sectors	Manufacturing Contribution to GDP (USD Billion)	Manufacturing as % of GDP	Manufacturing Employment (All Categories)	Manufacturing as % of All Employment	
					Male	Female
Indonesia	Food and beverages; metals and electronics; transportation equipment; chemical and pharmaceutical products	204.75	20	17,008,865	13	15
Batam Municipality	Heavy industry (fabricated metals)	5.39	55	151,805	29	24
Bekasi District	Heavy industry (fabricated metals, chemicals)	16.50	78	497,727	38	30
Deli Serdang District	Light industry (wood processing, rubber/plastic, food processing)	2.24	32	245,472	32	17
Gresik District	Heavy industry (chemicals)	3.92	48	176,923	29	26
Tangerang Municipality[a]	Light industry (garments, leather, rubber/plastic)	3.37	30	240,743	25	
Tangerang District	Light industry (garments, leather, rubber/plastic)	3.05	37	609,521	41	42

[a] Sex-differentiated employment statistics by industry for Tangerang Municipality are not publicly available.

Sources: BPS (2017a); BPS Kabupaten Bekasi (2018); BPS Kabupaten Deli Serdang (2018); BPS Kabupaten Gresik (2018a); BPS Kabupaten Tangerang (2018); BPS Kota Batam (2018); BPS Kota Tangerang (2018); Indonesian Ministry of Industry (2016); World Bank (2019a, 2019b).

Political Context

The political context of each field site is also distinct, depending on socio-cultural factors including ethnicity and religion, but also a broader political history. Reflecting the legacies of the New Order period (1967–1998), Indonesia's major political parties are non-programmatic, differentiating themselves primarily by whether they are religious or nationalist (Aspinall 2005a). Since 1998, the number of parties eligible to run candidates in each national legislative election has varied widely, from forty-eight in 1999 to just twelve in 2014 (Table 1.2).

Of the ten parties that gained seats in the national legislature in 2014, four – namely, the National Mandate Party (*Partai Amanat Nasional*, PAN), the National Awakening Party (*Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa*, PKB), the Prosperous Justice Party (*Partai Keadilan Sejahtera*, PKS), and the United Development Party (*Partai Persatuan Pembangunan*, PPP) – are identifiably Muslim. Among the nationalist parties, the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia–Perjuangan*, PDIP) alone has endured among a number of Sukarnoist parties that contested the elections in the early post-Suharto period. All others in this group were formed by members of Suharto's former political vehicle, known as the Functional Groups (*Golongan Karya*, Golkar). National governments are formed by rainbow coalitions that involve parties

TABLE 1.2. *Seats secured by parties represented in the 2014–19 national legislature from 1999*

Party	1999	2004	2009	2014
Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan (PDIP)	153	109	94	109
Partai Golongan Karya (Golkar)	120	128	106	91
Partai Gerakan Indonesia Raya (Gerindra)	N/A	N/A	26	73
Partai Demokrat	N/A	55	148	61
Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN)	34	53	46	49
Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB)	51	52	28	47
Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS)[a]	7	45	57	40
Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP)	58	58	38	39
Partai NasDem	N/A	N/A	N/A	35
Partai Hati Nurani Rakyat (Hanura)	N/A	N/A	17	16

[a] In 1999, PKS was known as *Partai Keadilan* (PK). It took on its present name after failing to meet the electoral threshold required to contest the 2004 election.

Source: KPU data processed by the authors.

from both religious and nationalist parties. For example, the candidacy of Joko Widodo (Jokowi) in the 2014 presidential race was supported not only by three nationalist parties – PDIP, the People's Conscience Party (*Partai Hati Nurani Rakyat, Hanura*), and the Great Indonesia Movement Party (*Partai Gerakan Indonesia Raya, Nasdem*) – but also by PKB (Muslim political party).

At the local level, many of the patterns at the national level are replicated. The main difference is that the dominant parties vary considerably from one region to another. The distribution of parties across our field sites in part not only reflects the traditional dominance of Golkar outside Java but also the dominant religious affiliations that characterize different regions (Table 1.3). Thus, for example, PKB is well represented in Gresik, which is located in the party's East Javanese heartland but completely absent from Deli Serdang, in North Sumatra, where in fact no Muslim parties are represented as a consequence of the relatively large Christian population in the province.

The Landscape of Organized Labor

The final part of the puzzle is the landscape of organized labor. One of the most powerful union organizations is the Confederation of Indonesian Trade Unions (*Konfederasi Serikat Pekerja Indonesia*, KSPI), a second-generation breakaway from the New Order-era union, which formed in 2003 after a group of federation leaders defected in 1999, taking a significant proportion of the membership with them. In the decades that followed, KSPI emerged as a leading force in the country's labor movement. Alongside it sat one of two splinters of the former state union, rebadged as the Confederation of All-Indonesia Workers Unions (*Konfederasi Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia*, KSPSI). The third major confederation, called the Confederation of Indonesian Prosperous Labor Unions (*Konfederasi Serikat Buruh Sejahtera Indonesia*, KSBSI), grew out of one of the alternative unions of the Suharto period (Ford 2009). One of the other seven confederations registered as of 2018 was the Congress of the Alliance of Indonesian Labor Unions (*Kongres Aliansi Serikat Buruh Indonesia*, KASBI), which brought together eighteen unions based on NGO-sponsored worker groups of the 1990s. In addition to these confederations, there are dozens of independent federations, whose number has increased over time.[7] Among the largest are the federations

[7] In 2005, the Ministry of Manpower reported that there were thirty-two unaffiliated federations; this number had increased to fifty-four by 2010. According to government figures, there were a total of 112 registered federations in 2016, about a third of these were affiliated with a confederation. The Ministry of Manpower is reluctant to release publicly its data on estimated membership, and those data it does release do not separately list the number of unaffiliated federations.

TABLE 1.3. *Party representation in local and national legislatures following the 2014 elections*

Field Site	Eligible Voters in 2014[a]	Dominant Parties in Local Legislature	Dominant Parties in Provincial Legislature	Provincial Representation in National Legislature
Batam Municipality Riau Islands	769,896	PDIP (8) Golkar (7) Gerindra (6)	PDIP (9) Golkar (8) Demokrat (7)	Nasdem (1) PAN (1) PDIP (1)
Bekasi District West Java	2,117,791	Golkar (10) PDIP (8) Gerindra (7)	PDIP (20) Golkar (17) PKS (12) Demokrat (12)	PDIP (18) Golkar (17) PKS (11)
Deli Serdang District North Sumatra	1,389,506	Golkar (8) Gerindra (6) PDIP (6)	Golkar (17) PDIP (16) Demokrat (14)	PDIP (4) Golkar (4) Gerindra (4)
Gresik District East Java	910,758	Golkar (11) PKB (8) PDIP (7) PPP (7)	PKB (19) PDIP (18) Demokrat (13)	PDIP (17) PKB (15) Demokrat (11) Gerindra (11) Golkar (11)
Tangerang Municipality Banten	1,272,163	PDIP (10) Gerindra (6) Golkar (6)	PDIP (15) Gerindra (10) Golkar (15)	PDIP (4) Gerindra (3) Golkar (3) PPP (3)
Tangerang District Banten	2,142,118	Golkar (7) PDIP (7) Demokrat (6) PPP (6)		

[a] Eligible voters calculated from electoral returns for the 2014 legislative elections.
Source: BPS Kabupaten Bekasi (2018); BPS Kabupaten Deli Serdang (2018); BPS Kabupaten Gresik (2018a); BPS Kabupaten Tangerang (2018); BPS Kota Batam (2018); BPS Kota Tangerang (2018); BPS Provinsi Banten (2018); BPS Provinsi Jawa Barat (2018); BPS Provinsi Jawa Timur (2018); BPS Provinsi Kepulauan Riau (2018); BPS Provinsi Sumatra Utara (2018).

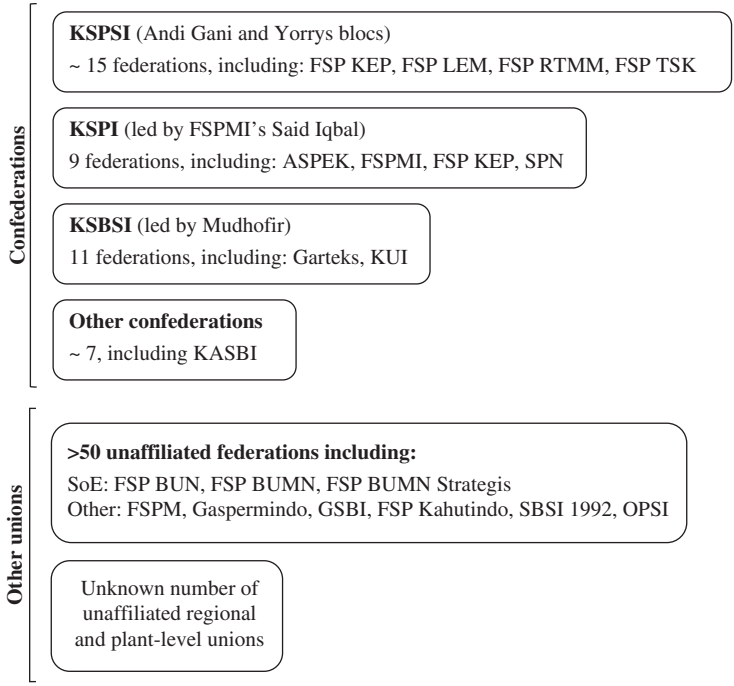
Confederations
KSPSI (Andi Gani and Yorrys blocs)
~ 15 federations, including: FSP KEP, FSP LEM, FSP RTMM, FSP TSK
KSPI (led by FSPMI's Said Iqbal)
9 federations, including: ASPEK, FSPMI, FSP KEP, SPN
KSBSI (led by Mudhofir)
11 federations, including: Garteks, KUI
Other confederations
~ 7, including KASBI
Other unions
>50 unaffiliated federations including:
SoE: FSP BUN, FSP BUMN, FSP BUMN Strategis
Other: FSPM, Gaspermindo, GSBI, FSP Kahutindo, SBSI 1992, OPSI
Unknown number of unaffiliated regional and plant-level unions

FIGURE 1.4. The Indonesian labor movement in 2018.

formed by employee groups in state enterprises and plantations.[8] There are also dozens of independent federations in the private sector, including some that also grew out of the student and NGO-sponsored worker groups that had emerged in the late Suharto period. Finally, hundreds of unaffiliated plant-level unions are registered across the country (Figure 1.4).

It is difficult to ascertain how many members each of these unions has because membership records are patchy and the government verification

[8] In 2005, the Ministry of Manpower reported that the Federation of State Enterprise Workers Unions (*Federasi Serikat Pekerja Badan Usaha Milik Negara*, FSP BUMN) and the Federation of Indonesian Plantation Workers Unions (*Federasi Serikat Pekerja Perkebunan Nusantara*, FSP BUN) had 86,607 and 116,355 members, respectively. FSP BUMN gave birth to two breakaway federations, the United Federation of State Enterprise Workers Unions (*Federasi Serikat Pekerja Badan Usaha Milik Negara Bersatu*, FSP BUMN Bersatu) and the Strategic Federation of State Enterprise Workers Unions (*Federasi Serikat Pekerja Badan Usaha Milik Negara Strategis*, FSP BUMN Strategis). Given the involvement of management in their formation, there is some doubt about the extent to which these organizations function as legitimate unions. They seldom collaborate with other unions on worker issues and focus primarily on opposing privatization.

process is unreliable.[9] It is clear, however, that among these many organizations, KSPSI and KSPI have the largest visibility in terms of membership, positions on tripartite bodies, and public engagement on a wide array of issues relevant to workers. KSPSI – which organizes across all industries and remains Indonesia's largest union body if the membership of its two splinters is combined – has enjoyed the benefits of enhanced access to tripartite bodies at the national and regional levels by virtue of its legacy status and large membership (Caraway 2008). But it has been KSPI that has driven the policy agenda since Said Iqbal, who has served as president of the metalworkers' union since 2006, took KSPI's reins in 2012.

While this national landscape is important, the labor movement has its own dynamics at the local level. KSPSI has a strong presence in all our field sites. But, beyond this commonality, the prominent unions vary across the case study locations (Table 1.4). In part, the variation in the industrial base partly explains the pattern of dominant unions in the different field sites. For example, the KSPI-affiliated National Workers Union (*Serikat Pekerja Nasional*, SPN), which is focused primarily on the textile, clothing, and footwear industries, is concentrated in the provinces of Banten and West Java. Similarly, the Federation of Indonesian Metalworkers Unions (*Federasi Serikat Pekerja Metal Indonesia*, FSPMI) – the most prominent federation within KSPI, and Indonesia's most politically active union – has a large membership in Bekasi and Batam, but a relatively minor presence in the other case study locations. However, history also plays a role in determining these patterns. In Deli Serdang, the Confederation of Indonesian Prosperous Labor Unions (*Konfederasi Serikat Buruh Sejahtera Indonesia*, KSBSI) and its splinter, SBSI 1992 have had a strong presence because many of their founders are from North Sumatra. Similarly, while large unions dominate Tangerang municipality and district, this region is home to an influential alliance of smaller unions, many of which have their roots in the independent worker groups of the late New Order period.

These factors – the presence of significant manufacturing and variation in the dominant industries, the political context, and the union landscape – drove our selection of local field sites. Once in the field, however, it became apparent that inter-locality dynamics, as well as connections between national federations and their local branches, were often a key element of labor politics at the local level. For example, unions in Gresik, one of our case studies, frequently

[9] With decentralization, the national ministry depends on local governments to report figures to them, and these figures must be taken with a grain of salt as they are self-reported. Some unions do not bother to take part in the verification process at all as they are not interested in gaining representation on tripartite committees. The size of each box in Figure 1.4 thus reflects our best estimate of the proportion of union members that it represents.

TABLE 1.4. *Dominant unions in the field sites*

Field Site	Suharto-Era Independent Organizing	Dominant Unions
Batam Municipality	Weak	FSPMI, KSPSI
Bekasi District	Weak	FSPMI, KSPSI
Deli Serdang District	Strong (primarily SBSI but also prominent labor NGOs)	KSPSI, KSBSI, SBSI 1992
Gresik District	Limited, but history of radical organizing in Greater Surabaya (unions, labor NGOs, and student groups)	FSP KEP, KSPSI, FSP Kahutindo
Tangerang Municipality/ District	Strong (primarily labor NGOs and student groups)	KSPSI, SPN, alliance of smaller unions

collaborated with unions based in other localities in East Java. Mobilizations around the minimum wage, especially in the larger metropolitan areas surrounding Jakarta and Surabaya, are also tightly interconnected. Given this, we make more direct comparisons across the five local cases when it makes analytic sense to think of them as relatively independent units of analysis – e.g., the engagement of unions in local executive races. But, for other issues, most notably minimum wages, the inter-local dynamics are crucial. Here, we draw on our field cases for illustrative examples, but we situate this case evidence more robustly in the regional and national contexts that are shaping local politics.

STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

Chapter 2 begins our analysis by examining the forces that produced Indonesia's highly mobilized but politically independent labor movement. Authoritarian legacies – exclusionary corporatism, the extermination of the left, and apolitical unionism – were decisive in the first phase of its evolution. As a consequence of these legacies, the labor movement had no party allies and was averse to participating organizationally in electoral politics. It, therefore, had no choice but to use street politics as its primary weapon in the struggle for more worker-friendly labor policy. In a second phase, new opportunities opened by the decentralization process led unions to experiment with electoral engagement. The focus of these efforts was at the local level where union activists backed executive candidates from many different parties, pragmatically trading their political support for pro-labor measures. In a third phase, unions drew on their past organizational learning and experimentation to extend their electoral engagement to the legislative arena. Indonesia's highly constraining electoral and party systems made forming a labor party difficult and required candidates to have party backing. Reluctant to tie themselves

directly to a single party, union strategists chose to place union cadres on legislative tickets of many different political parties. Autonomous electoral participation now complemented street politics as central features of labor's political strategy.

The next two chapters analyze why Indonesia's labor movement has been successful in winning many pro-labor policies. Chapter 3 examines the first decade of worker mobilization in the post-Suharto period. At the national level, the labor movement experienced stunning success in shaping labor law reform. Crucial to these early victories was the geographic concentration of union membership close to the capital, which allowed unions to mobilize many thousands of workers in Jakarta during the labor reform process. In the absence of strong ties to political parties, unions created mayhem in the streets to capture the attention of politicians and raise the cost of supporting laws that unions opposed. Since both the executive and the legislature had to approve labor legislation, unions could stop the enactment of anti-labor laws by peeling away legislative support. This task was facilitated by government instability and weak presidential control over coalition partners. The fact that the Minister of Manpower was from a labor background in some years also provided unions with access to the government. At the local level, by contrast, unions had fewer points of entry and less leverage. Although newly created tripartite wage councils gave workers a voice in wage-setting, executives had the final authority to determine minimum wage increases, and they were relatively immune to pressure from workers because they were indirectly elected. Once direct elections were phased in between mid-2005 and late 2008, unions gained a new point of leverage. But, after three decades of highly centralized authoritarian governance, unions took time to learn to navigate these new institutions and structures of authority.

Chapter 4 focuses on the labor movement's more assertive and offensive posture in a second decade of policy mobilization. At the national level, we show how unions learned to lobby more effectively, generate favorable media attention for their causes, and leverage judicial institutions to complement street mobilization. The labor movement made even greater strides at the local level, where unions embarked on an unprecedented round of mobilizations around wages. Having consolidated their networks and their position on the wage councils, they sought to transform them into institutions that delivered sustained real wage gains. In doing so, they exploited the opportunities presented by direct local and provincial executive elections, leveraging electoral cycles and harnessing regional patterns of wage setting to win widespread wage increases. Massive protests in several core industrial areas and stronger coordination among national confederations also allowed unions to nationalize local conflicts. They won the central government's support for higher wages and reduced outsourcing. Even after this support vanished, unions in some parts of Indonesia achieved substantial real minimum wage increases through their local organizing efforts.

The next three chapters critically assess union participation in electoral politics. Chapter 5 begins this analysis with an examination of their involvement in mayoral, district head, and gubernatorial races in our five field sites. It explains how unions negotiated with candidates in these races to secure political contracts, oral and written, promising patronage benefits and pro-labor policies in return for votes. As it shows, the content of these political contracts varied, as did the process through which they were reached. In some cases, they were little different from agreements struck with myriad community leaders where those individuals undertook to encourage members of their communities to vote for the candidate in return for money or public goods like a new road. In other cases, the focus was firmly programmatic, emphasizing measures such as better enforcement of labor regulations; more regular factory inspections; and affordable healthcare, housing, and transport. There were also enormous differences in the extent to which unions and candidates delivered on these contracts. But, even where they failed, they had the effect of raising the profile of labor issues as political issues and of unions as political actors – so much so that some unions decided to run candidates of their own.

Chapter 6 continues the discussion with an examination of the labor movement's unusual strategy of running union cadres as legislative candidates with a large number of non-programmatic parties. It begins by assessing parties' motivations for entering into these partnerships with unions, tracking the evolving strategies of PKS and Gerindra, the two parties that engaged most systematically in this endeavor. Chapter 6 then turns its attention to SPN and FSPMI, the two union federations that had the strongest organizational commitment to running legislative candidates in the period between 2004 and 2014. We also assess the influence of leadership, membership density, organizational culture, and organizational learning on their different trajectories of electoral engagement. In both cases, the initial decision to engage in the legislative arena was necessarily taken by the central leadership. But, in SPN's case, the poor showing of its candidates in the 2009 elections created internal friction, and the union quickly backed away from its organizational commitment to electoral politics. By contrast, FSPMI deepened its engagement in the 2014 legislative elections, resulting in the election of two union cadres to local legislative office in Bekasi. Unperturbed by the setbacks it experienced during the first Jokowi presidency, it again refined its organizational strategy for 2019.

We conclude our analysis of electoral politics in Chapter 7, which explores the question of whether the increased electoral engagement of Indonesia's unions has fostered the development of a working-class constituency. After explaining the specific challenges of developing such a constituency, we utilize evidence from surveys conducted in working-class communities in four union-dense districts in Bekasi and Tangerang to assess workers' views on political issues and to analyze their voting behavior in the 2009 and 2014 legislative and presidential races. We find evidence that there is a stable if not

growing proportion of workers with politicized collective identities. In legislative races, we argue that these politicized collective identities have not resulted in the formation of a working-class constituency but rather an organizational constituency rooted in the membership of one union, FSPMI. In presidential races, however, we find stronger evidence that union engagement in politics has contributed to the formation of a working-class constituency that crosses organizational divides.

The book concludes with a more detailed account of the backlash against unions in Jokowi's first term in office and some reflections on the lessons that can be learned from the Indonesian case. These lessons include the importance of geographic and institutional factors in allowing the labor movement to mobilize on a massive scale despite its low density and high levels of fragmentation, the role of the broader regime context in creating a political climate conducive for advancing a labor agenda through street politics, and the conditions under which decentralization can offer new opportunities for unions to pursue pro-labor policies at the local level. However, they also include the ways in which the Indonesian labor movement's diffuse, networked forms of power constitute a distinctive type of unionism, one that can compensate for weakness in classic measures of union strength.

2

The Street and the Ballot Box

Rather than relying primarily on workplace negotiations or relationships with political parties as the primary routes for pursuing its demands, Indonesia's labor movement has combined public protest outside the workplace with a range of unorthodox electoral strategies. From large rallies demanding increases in local minimum wages to mass mobilizations that shut down the toll roads leading to Jakarta, street-based protests by workers are a regular feature in contemporary Indonesian politics – as indeed was the case at key moments in the late New Order period. At the same time, unions have begun to experiment with electoral politics, backing nonlabor candidates for executive office and partnering with a variety of political parties to run union candidates in legislative elections at the local, provincial, and national levels. However, none have become permanent affiliates of any of Indonesia's major political parties; instead, they tenaciously maintain their political autonomy in the electoral arena.

In this chapter, we explain how and why Indonesia's labor movement adopted a mix of tactics, focusing analytically on the three distinct phases of its development identified in Chapter 1. We argue that the initial investment in street politics during the first phase, in which unions depended primarily on mobilization, was driven largely by authoritarian legacies from the Suharto era. These legacies determined not only the key characteristics of the labor movement during the early transition years but also which parties were available as potential allies. They interacted with elements of the transitional political economy to push unions onto the streets and away from electoral engagement. In the second phase, unions responded to new political opportunities at the local level – the introduction of direct elections for local executives – by adding a strategy of limited electoral engagement to their political repertoire. Unions began to exploit local executive elections to wrest concessions from candidates in order to influence labor policy at that level, which had become

increasingly important as a result of decentralization. Street protest and electoral engagement were synergistic and since the forces that drove unions to engage in street politics in the first place remained salient, they continued to rely heavily on the politics of disruption during this phase. Union strategy then entered the third phase, in which they deepened their engagement in the electoral arena by placing union cadres on the legislative tickets of different political parties. This decision was driven largely by organizational learning and experimentation, in which a subset of unions and union activists sought to create their own opportunities within a highly constraining electoral and party system. As in the second phase, street politics continued to be important, but unions also began to invest more in mobilizing their membership at the ballot box.

PHASE I: STREET POLITICS

The Indonesian labor movement's reliance on protest outside the workplace is one of its most distinctive features. In this section, we argue that the labor movement followed this path largely as a consequence of legacies from President Suharto's New Order regime (1967–98). Under Suharto, the state fundamentally restructured political parties and mass organizations such as unions, and wiped out the organized left, thus creating a tightly controlled polity that provided few institutional channels for expressing dissent. These political transformations, in turn, had profound consequences for the party and union landscape in the early transition years. Below, we highlight how Suharto's policies toward political parties and labor left a legacy that, in combination with certain features of the transition context, pushed Indonesia's young labor movement to lean more heavily on street politics than on political parties or collective bargaining.

Political Party Legacies

Among the many profound changes under Suharto that later shaped the terrain on which labor organized after 1998, the restructuring of Indonesia's political parties and the eradication of the left were among the most important. The Suharto regime came to power in the bloody aftermath of a thwarted coup attempt in 1965, which Suharto and his allies blamed on the Indonesian Communist Party (*Partai Komunis Indonesia*, PKI). This failed coup, in turn, was used as a pretext by the military and conservative social forces to carry out a systematic eradication of the left; they murdered hundreds of thousands of suspected members and sympathizers of the PKI, and detained hundreds of thousands more (Crouch 1978, Kammen and McGregor 2012, Melvin 2018, Roosa 2006, Robinson 2018). Virtually overnight, the regime eliminated one of the largest communist parties in the world. It went on to systematically punish former members of leftist organizations, in particular the PKI and associated groups.

The ferocity and thoroughness of the attack wiped out the left as an organized force in Indonesian politics. It was only two-and-a-half decades later that some visible organizing again emerged on the left. Even then, the left did not pose a serious threat to the regime. The first attempt to build a political vehicle for the working classes began in 1994, when student activists established what they hoped would become a "vanguard party." Known from 1996 as the Democratic People's Party (*Partai Rakyat Demokratik*, PRD), it was not only openly anti-capitalist but also took a Marxist position regarding the role of the working class as the primary agent of change (PRD 1996). The PRD was outlawed after the so-called "27 July Affair" in 1996, when the headquarters of a PDI splinter group were stormed and pro-democracy activists arrested (Aspinall 2005b). The consequence of this legacy is that there would be no viable left party when Indonesia made the transition from authoritarianism to democracy.

In addition to eradicating the left, the regime also fundamentally restructured Indonesia's party system in 1973. Whereas previously there were many parties, henceforth there would only be three. The regime consolidated the surviving parties into two "opposition" parties, the nationalist Indonesian Democratic Party (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia*, PDI) for the Christian and secular parties and the United Development Party (*Partai Persatuan Pembangunan*, PPP) for the Muslim parties (Crouch 1978). These parties coexisted with the state's political vehicle, known as the "Functional Groups" (*Golongan Karya*, Golkar). These organizations competed in elections, but these elections were not free and fair, and Golkar won every election handily; the regime also intervened in the internal affairs of these parties, preventing them from becoming truly autonomous contenders for power (Case 2013). Both PDI and PPP were increasingly feisty in the waning years of the Suharto regime (Aspinall 2005b), but their opposition to the regime produced at most a general reformist orientation. Both these parties and Golkar survived the end of authoritarianism to become important players in Indonesia's party system, where their familiarity with voters and party infrastructure throughout the archipelago gave them a competitive edge over new parties.

The eradication of the left and the restructuring of political parties created legacies that deeply influenced the party landscape during the early transition years. There were no natural bedfellows for labor, and none of the legacy parties had developed a programmatic orientation that favored organized labor. This tendency was reinforced by the severing of the ties between parties and unions. Before Suharto rose to power, many parties were linked to unions, for example, the PKI was connected to Indonesia's most powerful union, the All-Indonesia Central Organization of Workers (*Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia*, SOBSI); the Indonesian National Party (*Partai Nasional Indonesia*, PNI) to the Indonesian People's Labor Union (*Konsentrasi Buruh Kerakyatan Indonesia*, KBKI); and the Islamic Party, the Awakening of Islamic Scholars (*Nahdlatul Ulama*, NU), to the Indonesian Muslim Workers Union (*Sarikat*

Buruh Muslimin Indonesia, SARBUMUSI) (Hawkins 1971, Tedjasukmana 1958).[1] When Suharto restructured the party system, the regime broke these links. The absence of parties with institutionalized ties to labor would, in turn, shape the trajectory that labor would follow after the transition. But just as important as these party legacies was the legacy of exclusionary corporatism – the regime's overarching strategy for controlling the working class.

Exclusionary Corporatism

In addition to restructuring political parties and virtually eradicating the left, the regime also restructured mass organizations, including the unions. Fearful that labor was a potential avenue for communist infiltration, the regime sought to contain rather than to seek support from the working class (Ford 1999, Hadiz 1997, Schaarschmidt-Kohl 1988). As in other authoritarian capitalist states in East and Southeast Asia, organized labor was not seen as a potential basis of political support, as it was in many Latin American countries, but as a threat that had to be neutralized (Deyo 1989, Hadiz 1997). This form of labor incorporation is commonly referred to as exclusionary or state corporatism (Stepan 1978).

After eradicating Indonesia's most powerful Sukarno-era union, the communist-linked SOBSI (Hawkins 1971), Indonesia's system of exclusionary corporatism began to take shape in 1973, when the regime consolidated the surviving non-communist unions into a state-controlled federation, the All-Indonesia Labor Federation (*Federasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia*, FBSI), in the hope of creating a pliant organization that it controlled. Renamed the All-Indonesia Workers Union (*Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia*, SPSI) in 1985, this organization was granted a de facto monopoly on organizing in the private sector and thwarted efforts to form independent unions.

The state not only jealously guarded SPSI's monopoly of representation, but it also assured that the organization remained largely compliant.[2] SPSI received modest financial subsidies from the President, the Ministry of Manpower, and the State Secretariat, and employers were legally required to use the check-off system and to provide unions with secretariats in the workplace (Hadiz 1997). National, regional, and local governments also donated buildings and office space for district, provincial, and national secretariats, and the government permitted foreign labor organizations to conduct programs with the union (Caraway 2008, Ford 2009). The subsidies and aid received, however, were insufficient to provide functionaries with adequate salaries, so most sought additional work (Hadiz 1997). The difficulties of funding the organization's activities made union leaders easy targets for collusion with employers and

[1] See Ford (2010) for details of the Indonesian Labor Party of the 1940s and a discussion of the historical debates around the relationship between unions and political parties.

[2] For examples of cases where SPSI did not fully comply, see Ford (2009).

local officials (Kammen 1997). A 1986 ministerial decree required employer consent to establish unions, and the price of that consent was often employer meddling in leadership selection (Lambert 1999): heads of personnel and other management figures were commonly leaders of plant-level SPSI units.

In addition to these institutional means of containing the labor movement, the Suharto regime formulated an ideological framework for industrial relations designed to delegitimate conflict in the workplace and exclude unions from the political arena. Referring to the national ideology, and borrowing from organic statist and revisionist ideas, Pancasila Industrial Relations stressed the economic purpose of unions and the importance of harmony in the workplace (Ford 1999, 2009). In New Order Indonesia, the purpose of unions was restricted to defending the economic welfare of their members. Political unionism – in which unions were strongly aligned with a political party – was deemed to be no longer acceptable, and political parties were cast as preying on workers and exploiting them for their own political advantage (Ford 2005, 2010).[3] Over time, however, even the economic role of unions was further reduced. In its earliest incarnation, the Pancasila Industrial Relations framework recognized some conflicts of interest between workers and employers, but stipulated that these differences were to be worked out through consensus building, not by resorting to strikes and lock-outs. By the 1980s, however, the framework denied the existence of any conflict between employers and workers, so strikes and other forms of protest were inevitably blamed on outside forces that incited workers.

When conflict inevitably erupted despite these steps to contain it, the regime responded in a number of ways. The first was to channel brewing conflicts into labor dispute resolution institutions. The Suharto regime retained Sukarno-era labor laws that required unions to inform authorities before commencing a strike. Once workers had indicated their desire to strike, the state's dispute resolution apparatus was used to resolve the dispute. After going through this two- to three-week process, unions could strike legally, but employers could also take the matter to the local tripartite dispute resolution committee, essentially a form of compulsory arbitration that undercuts the effectiveness – and legality – of strikes (Ford 1999). A second measure involved tightening legal restrictions on strikes. Suharto left a pre-existing strike ban on vital industries in place and issued decrees designed to further discourage strikes (Caraways 2004). When institutions and legal obstacles failed to prevent labor protests, the state deployed a third response, which entailed more direct repression. The military and the police intervened in protests and strikes, and strike leaders faced dismissal, intimidation, interrogation by the military or the police, and physical violence (Hadiz 1997, INDOC 1981, Kammen 1997, YLBHI 1990,

[3] Some SPSI officials belonged to these parties, but they held peripheral positions in them and could at most hope to be awarded the occasional seat in the powerless national legislature (Hadiz 1997). However, neither Golkar nor the two authorized political parties cultivated FBSI (later SPSI) as a base of support.

1991, 1992, 1993, 1997). Military involvement in labor control was pervasive and especially severe in the 1980s, when General Sudomo headed the Ministry of Manpower (Ford 2009, Tanter 1990).

These industrial relations institutions came under intense stress in the late 1980s and early 1990s when a boom in labor-intensive export-oriented manufacturing resulted in a surge in industrial employment and the creation of large concentrations of workers in industrial areas on the periphery of many major Indonesian cities. Labor relations institutions were incapable of managing the inevitable increase in worker grievances, and the result was an explosion of labor conflict (Kammen 1997). With no officially sanctioned means of making collective demands, the *unjuk rasa* (literally, demonstration of feelings) became the archetypical means for workers to express their demands and grievances during this period. Most of these protests were wildcat actions rather than strikes undertaken in conjunction with collective bargaining negotiations. Workers made overwhelmingly legalistic demands, appealing to the government to enforce the labor laws that employers violated with impunity (Cahyono 1997, Kammen 1997). Importantly, the government made some concessions in response to these protests, such as raising minimum wages and strengthening labor law enforcement (Manning 1998).

Also important in driving this surge in worker protest were other developments that gave workers greater freedom to act collectively. First, the new Minister of Manpower advocated a less repressive approach to labor control and was willing to make some economic concessions to workers (Hadiz 1997). Second, a small group of independent labor movement organizations emerged. While not permitted to register as unions or even enter the factories, these independent organizations began to gain more traction with worker communities in industrial areas (Ford 2009). Third, labor rights abuses in Indonesia came under increased scrutiny by the international community, and the United States was threatening to cut off important trading privileges (Glasius 1999). This combination of factors resulted in the most disruptive and extended period of labor unrest of the Suharto years. Over time, however, the regime became less permissive. After a mass strike organized by one of the alternative unions in April 1994 descended into a full-scale riot, the space for labor activists to organize outside of the official union structure began to narrow, constricting even further after July 1996, when the regime moved against oppositional forces including labor (Ford 2009). But the mobilizations of the early-mid 1990s left their mark as they showed that workers could wrest concessions from a repressive authoritarian regime through collective protests.

Indonesia's exclusionary corporatist legacy had several implications for the post-Suharto labor movement. Perhaps the most important were low levels of union membership density. Despite its monopoly status, SPSI never organized a significant proportion of the workforce: its membership density on the eve of democratization was a paltry 2.7 percent of the total labor force (Quinn 1999). Moreover, as a "legacy union" created by the state to demobilize workers,

SPSI was both cautious and compromised, providing a fragile basis for building a vibrant labor movement after Suharto fell (Caraway 2008, 2012). And precisely because SPSI had been so ineffective in channeling labor grievances, independent organizations formed to advocate for worker rights, and unruly workers organized, often spontaneously, outside of corporatist structures to exert pressure on employers and the state. Although in its final years the regime suppressed organized efforts to mobilize outside of the mono-union framework, the wildcat actions of the early 1990s demonstrated what could be accomplished through disruptive collective action.

Consequences of Authoritarian Legacies for Street Politics after the Transition to Democracy

The immediate catalyst for Suharto's demise was the Asian financial crisis that swept through the region in mid-1997. The economic crisis rocked the political economies of many countries in the region, including Indonesia, where the economic catastrophe prompted mass popular mobilizations against the regime in early 1998 (Aspinall 2005b). After three days of rioting in Jakarta and the occupation of the parliamentary grounds by tens of thousands of students, fourteen members of Suharto's cabinet informed him that they would not serve in an interim government. Suharto resigned from office on 21 May and handed over power to Vice President Habibie. Working-class actors did not play a major role in these anti-regime protests, and there was no major domestic force demanding the immediate dismantling of the New Order system of labor relations (Aspinall 1999, Hadiz 1998). But, eager to establish its democratic credentials, the incoming Habibie administration moved quickly to reform Suharto's exclusionary corporatist system of labor relations and take the international spotlight off Indonesia's flagrant violations of labor rights (Caraway 2004, Ford 2000a). With the dissolution of SPSI's monopoly, Indonesia's union landscape became more diverse, fragmented, and unruly. Legacies from the authoritarian past would shape how Indonesia's emerging labor movement navigated this new terrain.

As a consequence of exclusionary corporatism, unions were organizationally weak in the workplace and collective bargaining traditions and institutions were poorly developed. A survey of firms conducted in the Jakarta metropolitan area in late 2001 found that among the forty-seven mostly large-scale firms surveyed – forty-two factories, four hotels, and one mining company – thirty-nine had unions, but only twenty-seven had collective labor agreements (SMERU 2002, 52). Collective bargaining agreements must be registered in Indonesia, and the early transition years showed little growth in their numbers. In addition, many of the agreements registered with the authorities were actually company regulations formulated by management (Palmer 2009, Quinn 2003). The weakness of unions in the workplace was reinforced further by several elements of the transition context. First, the new set of labor laws regulating trade unions allowed as few as ten workers to form a union and permitted

multi-unionism in the workplace. But in order to be authorized to bargain collectively on behalf of workers, unions had to have the support of a majority of workers in a workplace (Rokhani 2008). Second, despite the more open political environment and the recognition of freedom of association, labor dispute resolution institutions seldom prevented mass firings of striking workers, and the requirements for mounting a legal strike were both complicated and inconsistently interpreted. As a result, utilizing the strike weapon to exert pressure on employers during collective bargaining negotiations was a risky proposition (Caraway 2015). Third, the deep recession precipitated by the Asian financial crisis created an extremely challenging context for unions to strengthen collective bargaining institutions. Unions, of course, did engage in collective bargaining, and workers did go on strike, but these conditions meant that employers could resist efforts by workers to wrest concessions from them.

Authoritarian legacies also diminished the likelihood that Indonesia's unions would forge an alliance with a political party in order to advance a labor agenda. As a consequence of the restructuring of the political and industrial relations systems during the New Order, unions entered the transition period without strong ties to political parties, and no strong new left party with programmatic commitments to labor emerged. With democratization, it also became possible for unions to establish their own labor party, and of the forty-eight parties that competed in the 1999 elections, three had legitimate connections to labor unions (Ford 2000b). The best known of these parties was the National Labor Party (*Partai Buruh Nasional*, PBN), which was led by Muchtar Pakpahan, the founding chairperson of the Indonesian Prosperous Labor Union (*Serikat Buruh Sejahtera Indonesia*, SBSI), one of the alternative unions established during the late Suharto years. In addition, there was the Indonesian Workers Party (*Partai Pekerja Indonesia*, PPI), led by Wilhemus Bhoka, an SPSI leader during the Suharto era, and the PRD. Given the fragmented nature of popular forces in Indonesia (Aspinall 2013) and the fact that new parties had to prove that they were national organizations and create branches in half of localities, establishing these parties was in itself an impressive feat. Yet, none of these parties did well enough in the 1999 elections to provide workers with a substantive political voice.

Of the three parties, PBN performed the best, but garnered just 0.13 percent of the vote in 1999 (Ford 2005), which was insufficient to meet the 2 percent electoral threshold for participating in the 2004 election.[4] Pakpahan reconstituted the PBN as the Social Democratic Labor Party (*Partai Buruh Sosial Demokrat*, PBSD), which was the only labor-oriented party that competed in the 2004 elections. PBSD fielded over 200 candidates in thirty-two provinces and many more in local legislative elections, gaining a small number of seats

[4] Initially, parties that did not meet the threshold were required to disband, though their candidates could still take up seats in the legislature. This resulted in parties simply changing their name to compete in the next election.

(PBSD 2004). However, the party failed to mobilize workers, winning only 0.56 percent of the vote (Ford 2005). Now known as *Konfederasi Serikat Buruh Sejahtera Indonesia* (Confederation of Indonesian Prosperous Labor Unions), the union officially continued to support the party. By 2008, however, its own members began to break ranks, with at least one senior figure deciding to stand for another party in the 2009 election (Interview with KSBSI official, October 2008). After another poor showing in 2009, Pakpahan resigned from the leadership of the party in February 2010, and later that year, the party and KSBSI formally parted ways (Interview with KSBSI officials, February 2015).[5] PPI also failed to meet the electoral threshold in 1999, and some KSPSI cadres made a second attempt to form a purpose-specific labor party, the Indonesian Workers' Congress Party (*Partai Kongres Pekerja Indonesia*), in 2001. Although the party passed an initial round of verification in the lead-up to the 2004 elections, it faltered in the second round, bringing attempts by KSPSI cadres to establish a political party to an end (Ford 2005). The PRD also attempted to register for the 2004 election under another name, but it failed to complete the registration process. A successor was established in January 2007, but ultimately did not contest the 2009 elections (Caraway and Ford 2014).

Given the comparatively scant resources of these parties, it is not surprising that they performed poorly when competing with better-resourced parties led by established members of the political elite. But such abysmal results were also a product of the New Order's ideological attacks on political unionism, which deeply influenced not only KSPSI's leaders but also much of the independent labor movement, which remained suspicious of electoral engagement (Ford 2005). The fragmentation of the labor movement also added to the difficulty of establishing a viable labor-based party (Caraway and Ford 2017). The various pro-labor parties were tied to particular unions or even specific individuals, not joint projects among unions. Support for the parties was tepid even from the unions to which the founders belonged. KSBSI was formally linked to Pakpahan's party, but support for the party among KSBSI's leadership had always been lukewarm, and became increasingly so with each disappointing performance at the polls (La Botz 2001, 216).[6] As for KSPSI, the parties formed by its cadres were never formally backed by the confederation.

[5] The party regrouped but could not participate in the 2014 elections, having failed to meet the requirements of the verification process (*Seputar Jabar,* 31 May 2013).

[6] These sentiments reached a head when the secretary-general of KSBSI, Bismo, challenged the confederation's continuing support for PBSD at the 2007 Congress. At Pakpahan's behest, Bismo was removed from the national leadership of the confederation. Aside from the poor performance at the polls, members of KSBSI and other unions identified the dominance of ethnic Batak, many of them Christian, in both the party and the union, as a barrier to wider support. Unionists also objected to the fact that many of the candidates who ran for the party were academics or business people, not workers (Interviews with union cadres and ACILS staff in 2007 and with union cadres in Batam, Jakarta, Medan, Semarang, and Surabaya in 2007 and 2008).

Organizational divisions combined with the authoritarian legacies foreclosed the possibility of linking up with or establishing a unifying labor party that would provide unions with a direct channel to the legislature. Without this channel, the pull of the street was strong, and workers tested the waters by mounting major strikes and protests (Aspinall 1999, Hadiz 1998). Street mobilization also tapped into the powerful *unjuk rasa* tradition of the late Suharto era, when workers followed the lead of other social movements and took their grievances to the streets. The freeing of prominent labor activists such as Muchtar Pakpahan and Dita Sari, and their ability to return to labor organizing, also sent an important signal that labor activism was no longer considered subversive. Over time, the military and the police reduced their intervention in workplace labor disputes, so workers who went on strike might lose their jobs but seldom risked arrest or their lives.[7] The relative freedom to organize and protest meant that unions could now take their grievances to the streets with much less fear of violent reprisals, creating the conditions for using collective protest as a deliberate tactic rather than a last-ditch response by workers to workplace injustice.

Although workers could organize and protest more freely, they still had limited formal influence in Indonesia's new democratic institutions. Their main point of access was through the Ministry of Manpower. Between October 1999 and October 2004, two KSPSI presidents served as minister – Bomer Pasaribu (October 1999 to August 2000) and Jacob Nuwa Wea (August 2001 to October 2004).[8] Having a union leader in the ministry was helpful, especially with regard to the development of labor regulations. But since unions had minimal links to electorally competitive political parties, they also had limited access to the legislature, which would play a central role in formulating Indonesia's new labor laws. Lobbying was a new activity for unions, one they were ill-equipped to carry out. Although most bills are initiated by the executive, the various commissions in the national legislature (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat*, DPR) play a central role in determining the final shape of legislation (Sherlock 2010). Influencing the work of these commissions, however, was difficult.

One difficulty was the large number of parties holding a significant number of seats in the legislature, as unions would have to lobby legislators from many different parties in order to shape legislation. In addition, most legislators did not represent union-dense districts, and had little incentive to respond to labor's demands – especially since unions did not have the kind of financial

[7] This is not to say that there was no violence against workers. Even years after the transition, there were well-documented cases of brutality by the military and the police, and progress was slower outside of Java, particularly on plantations and in mining companies. Employers also began to use the courts to file criminal cases against workers who led strikes or confronted management during labor disputes. See Caraway (2010a) for some illustrative cases.

[8] Formally known as FSPSI in the early Suharto years, the legacy union was restructured as a confederation, KSPSI, in 2000.

resources required to purchase their support.[9] Even legislators from union-dense areas have little reason to fear future punishment from voters, as the legislature governs primarily through consensus and votes are only taken when the leadership cannot negotiate a consensus position.[10] Unions managed to forge supportive relationships with some legislators on the relevant commissions, but this support seldom translated into wider support within the party because members of the same party or coalition of parties commonly take contradictory positions on issues (Farhan 2018, Sherlock 2012). Without money or strong programmatic commitments, securing support from a majority of a commission's membership is difficult unless unions can capture the attention of party leaders, who usually leave matters in the hands of legislators unless an issue becomes controversial (Sherlock 2012). The easiest way to attract the attention of party leaders was to mount large, disruptive protests that put the national spotlight on the legislature and pressured party leaders to weigh in and impose party discipline. These protests also provided opportunities for sympathetic legislators to appear in public or on television to support workers and to work from the inside to persuade party leaders to side with unions. The labor movement used similar tactics to exert pressure on successive presidents, who also had no strong links or commitments to labor.

During this first phase, street protest, therefore, became the signature mode through which the labor movement advanced working class demands. Authoritarian legacies and elements of the political-economic context during the transition period combined to push Indonesia's unions onto the streets. As a result of the legacies of exclusionary corporatism, unions were weak in the workplace and collective bargaining institutions were undeveloped. Conditions in the early transition years, moreover, were unpropitious for strengthening collective bargaining institutions. Another path not taken was pursuing a labor agenda through an alliance with a political party – in part a consequence of the non-programmatic nature of Indonesia's major parties. The obliteration of the left, the severing of party-union ties, and anti-party ideology from the Suharto years interacted with the fragmented character of the newly emerging labor movement to similarly thwart the establishment of a labor-based party. With these more institutionalized pathways foreclosed, the pull of the street was strong. This disruptive mode of engagement, moreover, was a familiar tactic, and the nature of Indonesia's political institutions further incentivized unions to opt for the politics of disruption. Mobilization in

[9] For a discussion of how money shapes Indonesian elections and politics, see Robison and Hadiz (2004), Winters (2011), Mietzner (2013), Ford and Pepinsky (2014) and Aspinall and Berenschot (2019).

[10] Votes may also be taken when legislators reject the solution negotiated by party leaders, but this rarely occurs because party leaders have the power to recall legislators who deviate from the party line (Sherlock 2012). If deadlock occurs during discussions, party leaders hold closed meetings to negotiate a compromise solution (Sherlock 2003).

the streets, not collective bargaining or allying with a political party, therefore, became the primary channel through which unions pursued collective goals in the early years of the post-Suharto period.

PHASE II: STREET POLITICS AND THE EMERGENCE OF AUTONOMOUS ELECTORAL ENGAGEMENT

In the early years after the transition to democracy, unions relied overwhelmingly on street politics and avoided electoral politics. This approach changed in response to a shift in the political opportunity structure at the local level, specifically, the introduction of direct elections for executives at the district, municipality, and provincial levels in mid-2005. This change in local political institutions opened the door for unions to use these elections to shape policy at the local level, and to do so without compromising their autonomy from political parties. Unions seized this opportunity to cut deals with executive candidates, exchanging commitments from them in exchange for a pledge to mobilize union members at the polls. This form of electoral engagement was synergistic with – and to some extent dependent on – street politics, as it was the mobilization of workers on the streets that most visibly and vividly demonstrated their mass base, and that also reminded executives of the consequences for not keeping their promises. Unions thus continued to deploy mass mobilization while beginning to engage more robustly in the electoral arena in this second phase.

New Political Opportunities

Two major developments combined to create new political opportunities for unions at the local level: decentralization and the shift from a system of indirect to direct elections for executives. After the fall of Suharto, Indonesia not only democratized but also underwent a dramatic decentralization of government. An increasing number of government functions were devolved to the district/municipality and provincial levels, and elected local governments took on many more responsibilities (Buehler 2010, Malley 2003). The second important shift was from a system of indirect to direct election not only of the president but also for executives at the provincial and district/municipal levels.[11] Initially, elected local legislators had chosen local executives. These indirect elections resulted in government instability, weak executive accountability to voters, and massive corruption, which in turn prompted the constitutional and legislative reforms required to phase in direct elections (Horowitz 2013, Mietzner 2010, Sulistiyanto and Erb 2009).[12] The first direct election for president was in 2004. Beginning in mid-2005, direct elections for provincial

[11] Law No. 22/1999 on Regional Autonomy provided that districts, municipalities, and provinces would be governed by their own democratically elected assemblies.

[12] See Law No. 32/2004 on Regional Administration.

and local executives were introduced on a staggered schedule, with the first round occurring over a three-and-a-half-year period from mid-2005 to late 2008, and the second round from 2010 to 2013.[13]

This transformation in the electoral system had important consequences for political competition at the local level. Under the system of indirect elections, the selection of the district or municipal head was the result of horse-trading among parties in the legislature, lubricated by copious exchanges of cash (Buehler 2010, Choi 2011, Malley 2003). With the onset of direct elections, parties still formed coalitions to support a candidate – the composition of which varied from place to place, reflecting the non-programmatic nature of these parties (Choi 2011).[14] But parties now had to select candidates in advance and had to take into account the electability of their favored candidate.[15] Consequently, these races became more candidate-centered, and political parties essentially served as vehicles for established local figures (Aspinall 2013, Buehler 2007).[16] Candidates seeking election as regional heads required the backing of a party (or coalition of parties) that had secured at least 15 percent of seats or at least 15 percent of votes in the last legislative election in that region (Sulistiyanto and Erb 2009, 20).[17] But party control over executive races was diluted as a result of a Constitutional Court ruling in 2007 that allowed independent candidates to run for executive positions at the district, municipality, and provincial levels (Buehler 2010). This ruling also intensified competition by allowing more candidates to compete. As voter identification with parties has diminished (Liddle and Mujani 2007, Mujani and Liddle 2010, Ufen 2008),[18] and as competition at the local level has intensified, candidates have had to invest in developing direct

[13] Subnational executive elections did not coincide with subnational legislative races, which are held simultaneously with the national legislative elections. Until 2019, these were held a few months before the presidential race.

[14] These "rainbow coalitions" have also characterized many presidential cabinets (Slater 2014).

[15] Parties often back whichever candidate they think has the best shot, regardless of whether she or he is a party cadre. Because local executives have access to extensive patronage resources, backing a winner is critical given the increasing cost of elections and the need to replenish war chests (Mietzner 2007, 2015, Tomsa 2012). Parties also charge large sums to candidates for endorsements (Aspinall and As'ad 2015, Buehler 2010, Buehler and Tan 2007, Choi 2011, Mietzner 2007, 2015).

[16] As a consequence, it is not uncommon for candidates to change parties between elections. For example, Batam Mayor Muhammad Rudi began his political career with PKB, but ran as a candidate for the Democratic Party (*Partai Demokrat*) in 2016, and switched his affiliation to Nasdem after he was elected (*Batam Pos*, 29 August 2016).

[17] Aceh, where independent candidates were permitted from 2006, was the exception to this rule.

[18] In 2004, nearly 60 percent of Indonesian voters said that they felt close to a party, but by 2009, it had fallen to only 22 percent (Mujani and Liddle 2010, 41). This downward trend continued, and by 2014, only about 15 percent of voters admitted to being close to any political party (Muhtadi 2018). Diminishing party identity is also reflected in more split ticket voting and by voting for different parties across election cycles.

ties with voters. Money proved to be a necessary but insufficient condition for winning (Buehler 2007, 2010, Tans 2012).

With the advent of direct elections, the combination of more candidate-centered races with intense competition in local elections created space for organized interests at the local level to cultivate ties with candidates and for candidates to woo organized constituencies. Candidates in union-dense districts had incentives to develop relationships with the unions,[19] which they hoped could provide the margin of victory in close races. For the unions, this transformation opened up exciting possibilities for influencing labor affairs, since local executives play a decisive role in many labor issues. Until 2017, local executives were responsible for enforcing labor laws.[20] They also appoint the personnel who run local Manpower offices and control business permits – and have played a decisive role in setting local minimum wages since 2000.

It was virtually impossible for unions to run a candidate for local executive office during this first cycle of direct elections because political parties still had complete control over the nomination of candidates, and labor activists could not have raised sufficient funds to pay parties for their endorsement. So, if unions wanted to leverage local elections to wrest concessions from candidates, their only choice was to back non-union candidates. Because Indonesia's parties are unprogrammatic, there was little reason to prioritize candidates based on their party affiliation, so individual unions and union alliances opportunistically cut deals with candidates from a wide variety of political parties, demanding pro-labor policy commitments and resources for unions in exchange for their members' votes. The political opportunity structure opened further in 2008 when it became possible to run for executive office as an independent.[21] However, unions seldom pursued this option because fulfilling the requirements to register an independent candidate was both costly and time-consuming (Buehler 2010).

Continued Salience of the Street

This engagement in local executive elections complemented, and in many ways depended on, the continued deployment of street politics. Their chosen electoral strategy at the local level depended on executive candidates

[19] Candidates, of course, also have incentives to develop other constituencies as well. Aspinall (2014a, 815) argues that direct local elections have encouraged incumbents and challengers to appeal to lower-class voters through making promises to provide constituents with better access to healthcare: "the new political elite have become increasingly motivated to build political constituencies by responding to the interests of urban labor, the informal sector, and the rural poor." Fossati's (2016) statistical analysis of healthcare spending in Indonesia's districts found evidence that access to social services among the poor increases in election years in electorally competitive districts. See also Savirani and Aspinall (2017) and Gibbings, Lazuardi, and Prawirosusanto (2017).

[20] In 2017, this authority was transferred to provincial governments.

[21] See Law No. 12/2008 concerning Second Changes to Law No. 32/2004 on Regional Administration.

noticing labor as a constituency worth cultivating, which, given the unprogrammatic nature of parties, would require unions to continue to demonstrate – visibly – their ability to mobilize their membership. Candidates in union-dense districts looked to unions in large part because they had proven their capacity to mobilize a large number of workers. At the local level, the primary issue around which unions mobilized was the minimum wage. Since late 2001, tripartite minimum wage councils met annually to set minimum wages for the upcoming year in districts/municipalities and provinces throughout Indonesia. In order to exert pressure on government representatives, unions needed to prove to the government that being too stingy with minimum wage increases would have real political consequences. Executives appointed the government members on the wage councils, and directly elected executives were more likely to be responsive to unions than indirectly elected executives, as they had to build and sustain support from voters. To ratchet up the pressure on local executives, unions formed local networks whose primary activity was organizing large protests during minimum wage negotiations.[22] These protests were necessary both to remind incumbents and future candidates of their mobilizational capacity and to exert pressure on executives in non-election years.

Developments at the national level also encouraged unions to continue to deploy street protests in Jakarta. After 2004, no labor leaders held the coveted ministerial post; so their access to the executive branch was more limited, and unions still had no institutional access to the legislature. Given the lack of direct access to political institutions, the labor movement still had strong incentives to hit the streets. In this second phase, then, we see not only a continuation of past patterns of labor engagement in politics – street politics – but also an expansion of their repertoire of engagement to encompass more direct participation in elections. This change in strategy was provoked by the new opportunities opened up by the onset of direct elections for local executives, and marked a significant step in the evolution of Indonesia's labor movement. Unions intensified their experimentation in politics, learning from these experiences, which would, in turn, have consequences for their political engagement in subsequent years. This new electoral participation worked in tandem with, and depended on, the tried and true tactic of street mobilization. But the labor movement's continued reliance on the politics of disruption also taxed union resources and made heavy demands on union members. As the 2009 national election approached, some unions decided that reducing their reliance on street politics required them to formulate a long-term strategy of deepening electoral engagement. This process of learning and adaptation prompted them to begin running union cadres as legislative candidates.

[22] See Tjandra (2016, 129–38) for a discussion and description of some of these local networks.

PHASE III: STREET POLITICS AND THE DEEPENING OF AUTONOMOUS ELECTORAL ENGAGEMENT

A decade of reliance on street politics, while resulting in some substantial policy successes, also prompted a desire among some unions to develop a legislative electoral strategy as an additional means to influence policy. Emboldened by their experience in local executive races, they began to field their own candidates, as they believed that legislators with organizational ties to the labor movement were more likely to carry through with their pledges to advance a pro-labor agenda than the typical politician who had no such links. This new tactic was the product of organizational learning and experimentation in which unions creatively acted within constraints, the most important of which was continued party control over legislative candidacies. As with their engagement in executive elections, they maintained their organizational autonomy by not tying themselves to a political party.

Deepening Electoral Engagement

The shape that this electoral experiment took was constrained by the political opportunity structure created by Indonesia's election and party laws. In 1999, party registration had been relatively easy. But, by 2009, the rules for registering a party and for qualifying to compete in an election were more stringent. Instead of requiring the presence of chapters in 50 percent of all provinces and 50 percent of districts and municipalities in those provinces, parties were required to establish branches in 60 percent of all provinces, 50 percent of all districts and municipalities in the province, and 25 percent of all subdistricts in the district or municipality concerned. The electoral law set an even higher standard: parties seeking to participate in the 2009 election had to establish chapters in two-thirds of all provinces, and districts and municipalities.[23] Even if unions had succeeded in registering a party, chances are it would not have survived to compete in the next election. In 1999, parties only had to win 2 percent of the vote in order to compete in the next election; in 2009, the electoral threshold was 2.5 percent. Moreover, individuals from parties that did not meet this threshold could no longer claim their seats.[24]

Given the fragmentation of the labor movement, unions seeking to compete in the legislative elections would likely not be able to do so through establishing their own party. At the same time, many union cadres remained reluctant to become organizationally tethered to a non-labor party, and many union

[23] These hurdles were raised further for the 2014 election, when parties were required to have chapters in all provinces, as well as in 75 percent of districts and municipalities in each province, and 50 percent of sub-districts in the districts and municipalities, with the exception of parties in Aceh (Fionna and Tomsa 2017, Mietzner 2013, Schmidt 2010).

[24] The parliamentary threshold was also increased to 3.5 percent in 2014 (Shair-Rosenfield 2019).

constitutions still prohibited such a relationship. But, given that independent legislative candidacies were not permitted, unions would have to do deals with existing political parties if they wanted to dip their toes into the electoral waters – and, given the unprogrammatic character of Indonesia's political parties, there was no reason to promote one party over another. Union cadres who sought to deepen the electoral participation of unions were also concerned about alienating members if they paired up with just one party, as their members had many different partisan affinities. The solution was a pragmatic one. Rather than establish a monogamous relationship with one political party, they maintained their political autonomy by working opportunistically with any party that was willing to run union cadres on the party's legislative slate.

Fortunately for the union cadres who were eager to experiment with running legislative candidates, some parties were open to running union candidates. Although the labor movement could not offer much at the national level to parties, given its small size and the patchiness of its geographic footprint, it potentially had more to offer them in union-dense localities. In highly competitive multi-member districts, however, securing a base of union voters could provide the margin of victory required by parties, and labor cadres could be valuable vote-getters due to their connections to their members. Around 2004, parties large and small began to woo union leaders (Ford and Tjandra 2007). In 2009, the party most interested in tapping into labor votes was the Prosperous Justice Party (*Partai Keadilan Sejahtera*, PKS), which ran union candidates in many races in union-dense districts at the local, provincial, and national levels. The branch leadership of many different parties in these areas also agreed to run union candidates. As a result of these deals, unions had the opportunity to test their mettle in the electoral arena. Union candidates did not fare well in these races, in part because they were given low positions on party tickets, which, in a closed-list system, virtually assured that they would not be elected. But on the eve of the 2009 election, the Constitutional Court ruled that the number of votes received, not the placement on the ballot, should determine victory. With this decision, unions could hope to elect their candidates regardless of their ballot position, which gave unions a stronger chance to elect labor candidates than before.

Unions' experiments in the legislative arena did not come at the cost of their engagement in executive races. Indeed, unions not only continued to cut deals with non-labor candidates for local and provincial races, but also tried their hand at placing union cadres on the ballot as independent candidates. Drawing on their growing experience in cutting deals with local and provincial candidates, unions were also emboldened to try their hand at replicating these tactics at the national level in presidential races. Beginning in 2009, and then coming into fuller fruition in 2014 and 2019, unions assumed an increasingly public profile in presidential campaigns, securing both formal and informal commitments from presidential candidates. As before, these various forms of electoral engagement depended on retaining street mobilization in their arsenal of political weapons.

Street Politics

As unions deepened their electoral engagement, they continued to deploy street politics. As in the second phase, the success of their electoral strategy depended enormously on their visibility. Turning out mass numbers of workers at the offices of mayors and district heads in provincial capitals, and in Jakarta was essential to demonstrating their potential to mobilize votes on election day, and to hold politicians accountable for delivering on their promises. The institutional factors that prompted a reliance on the street in earlier phases also continued to be salient in this third phase. At the local level, street mobilization was still necessary during minimum wage negotiations, in particular in non-election years, when incumbents might be more resistant to approving generous wage increases. At the national level, access to the legislature continued to be limited, and successive presidents did not appoint labor leaders to ministerial posts. In addition, few labor candidates won legislative seats. They also had mixed success when cutting deals with winning candidates in executive races. In short, unions could not depend primarily on elections to achieve their goals.

The lure of the street also remained strong a decade after democratization, because unions had not substantially strengthened their workplace bargaining power. A survey of 658 unionized workplaces conducted in 2009 found that only 61 percent had a collective bargaining agreement, and of these agreements, only 53 percent had provisions that were better than those required by law (Caraway 2010a, 20). This continued weakness was partly driven by increased flexibilization of the workforce. Employers have replaced many unionized permanent workers with non-unionized contracts and/or outsourced labor (Juliawan 2010, Tjandraningsih and Nugroho 2008). But it is also a result of the central role that minimum wage councils play in wage-setting. Wage councils became more important than workplace-level collective bargaining for wage-setting (Alatas and Newhouse 2010, ILO 2015b, Saget 2008), and over time created a feedback effect in which unions relied more and more on this institution, and not on collective bargaining, to set wages. This, in turn, further weakened their power to confront employers in the workplace, and thus strengthened their reliance on the streets. But unions also branched out in new directions – drawing on lessons learned and experimenting within constraints – to forge new forms of electoral engagement in the legislative arena, and to deepen and scale up their participation in presidential elections.

CONCLUSION

This chapter analyzed how and why Indonesia's labor movement has followed an unusual pathway of combining street protest with autonomous electoral engagement, explaining how an initial reliance on street protest evolved into a more varied repertoire of political engagement in which unions not only

protested in public space but also dipped their toes into the electoral waters and then jumped in with both feet. As we have shown here, authoritarian legacies and elements of the political-economic context of the transition initially drove unions into the streets and away from electoral engagement and workplace-centered tactics. These early choices had consequences for the range of options available to them in later years.

Having missed the opportunity to establish a viable labor party, unions expanded their electoral engagement in a step-by-step fashion. First, they responded to new political opportunities opened up by direct elections for local executives. They later maneuvered creatively within the constraints of Indonesia's electoral party system to run legislative candidates for a wide variety of parties, and scaled up tactics developed at the local level to the national level, cutting deals with not just local executive hopefuls but also with presidential candidates. As unions increased their participation in electoral politics, they steadfastly maintained their autonomy and cut deals with politicians from, and ran labor cadres as candidates for, many different parties. Throughout, street politics remained their signature mode of engagement because of their limited access to political institutions and weak position in the workplace.

The politics of the street and the ballot box confounded expectations by producing an increasingly politicized but politically independent labor movement. In Indonesia's new democracy, organized labor made its presence felt most acutely through the politics of the street, where it repeatedly turned out masses of workers to resist policies it opposed. But how effective were these forms of engagement in achieving the unions' policy goals? In the next two chapters, we demonstrate that – despite the labor movement's organizational weakness – this combination of tactics was surprisingly successful in securing pro-labor policies at the local and national levels.

3

National and Local Policy Struggles, 1998–2008

After more than thirty years of dictatorship, the transition to democracy heralded a new era in which the labor movement could advance a labor agenda through democratic politics. As discussed in the previous chapter, institutional channels for pursuing such an agenda were relatively limited, so the labor movement continued to rely primarily on street protests to make their demands. The reform of Indonesia's labor laws was a top priority at the national level in the first decade after the fall of Suharto, and the labor movement's focus centered on shaping the content of these new laws. Given its youth, organizational fragmentation, and small size, Indonesia's labor movement was surprisingly effective. Unions not only blocked legislation that they opposed, but they also secured a seat at the policy table to hammer out the details of a controversial labor law. As a consequence of these interventions, Indonesia ended up with the strongest legal frameworks for workers' rights in East and Southeast Asia (Caraway 2009, 2010b).

The labor movement was less successful in influencing policy at the local level, where local governments had gained significant authority over labor affairs as a result of the decentralization process. This failure was evident in the key issue of minimum wages. Minimum wage increases in industrial areas were no better and often worse than in non-industrial areas, and real increases in minimum wages in some years were partially offset by longer periods of wage restraint. After more than half a decade of wage-setting at the local level, in 2008 wages in most of the country remained below the government's threshold for a decent living standard (*kebutuhan hidup layak*, KHL).[1]

[1] The decent living standard was first introduced in Law No. 25/1997 on Manpower, but implementation was delayed because of the Asian financial crisis. The decent living standard replaced the previous, and less generous, basic needs standard (*kebutuhan hidup minimum*, KHM). Law No. 13/2003 on Manpower required that minimum wages move toward the higher decent living standards. In 2005, the Ministry of Manpower determined that the

In Indonesia, minimum wage negotiations are more important than collective bargaining for wage-setting (ILO 2015b, 1, World Bank 2010). And since minimum wages function as wage ceilings rather than as wage floors (Saget 2008), the failure to win more generous increases had major consequences for workers. On this fundamental bread-and-butter issue, then, unions came up short.

In this chapter, we analyze the first decade of worker mobilizations in the policy arena, focusing first on the fractious process of national labor law reform and then minimum wage-setting at the local level. Three factors explain the more successful mobilization around national policy. First, in the absence of strong ties to political parties, unions captured the attention of politicians and raised the cost of pushing forward regulations and laws that unions opposed by creating mayhem in the streets at key points during the reform process. Such large demonstrations were possible because union membership is geographically concentrated in areas close to the capital, where labor regulations were made. Second, the fact that both the executive and the legislature had to approve labor legislation gave unions multiple veto points. In Indonesia's newly democratic setting, both legislators and presidents needed to demonstrate some responsiveness to citizen's demands, and labor was among those making the loudest demands, often by the thousands, right outside their offices. The Wahid government's instability and the weak control that stronger presidents had over their coalition partners also aided labor's efforts to peel away legislative support from bills that it opposed. Third, until the end of 2004, the Minister of Manpower was more often than not from a labor background. This provided unions with access to information about the reform process and allowed the minister, who had the power to issue decrees, to shape reforms in ways that benefitted workers.

At the local level, by contrast, unions faced a far more constrained political opportunity structure. While unions did mobilize to demand more generous wage increases, the decentralized wage institutions put in place in 2001 gave them fewer points of entry. Minimum wage increases were determined solely by the executive in consultation with tripartite committees. Unions did pressure the executive to side with them in the annual negotiations, but local executives had little incentive to respond to their demands before direct elections were phased in between mid-2005 and late 2008. In the wake of the Asian financial crisis they, therefore, largely followed Jakarta's recommendations. With the advent of direct elections, unions gained a new point of leverage at the local level, as candidates for executive office in union-dense areas had stronger incentives to respond to workers' demands. But after three decades of highly centralized authoritarian governance, this new landscape of decentralized politics was alien territory. The multitude of unions at the local level had

decent living standard would be based on a basket of forty-six goods, the value of which was to be determined through market surveys conducted by local wage councils (see Manning and Roesad 2007). In 2012, the number of components in the basket of goods was raised to sixty.

to learn to navigate these new institutions and structures of authority. Thus, while the labor movement continued to utilize the tactics it developed in the late Suharto period to shape policy at the national level, the quickly evolving local context presented a steeper learning curve.

NATIONAL POLICY: STRUGGLES OVER LABOR LAW REFORM

After the fall of Suharto, Indonesia undertook to reform its labor laws to provide stronger formal protections for labor rights. Over the course of six years, it enacted three major laws that set the overarching rules governing labor relations. The main arena for drafting the laws and for formulating implementing decrees was Jakarta. Legislation had to be approved by both the president and the national legislature, while the executive branch had the authority to unilaterally issue implementing decrees. Fortuitously for the labor movement, union membership was heavily concentrated in the Greater Jakarta region, which allowed it to mobilize thousands of workers in protest against legislation and regulations that it opposed. These protests were largely effective in influencing the legislature to stall reforms that labor opposed and persuading the executive branch to reverse unpopular decrees. In fact, they were so effective that the mere threat of labor resistance led the government to abort later attempts to alter legislation in a pro-business direction. In addition, leaders of the former state union controlled the ministerial portfolio for several years. This sometimes gave labor a point of access to the executive, and which in one case produced an unexpected windfall for workers. We begin our analysis by outlining the labor reform agenda and then draw on three episodes of contention to illustrate how unions used street politics to persuade the executive and legislative branches of the national government to abandon labor reforms that unions opposed.

The Labor Reform Agenda

The first item on the labor reform agenda was Law No. 25/1997 on Manpower.[2] Passed during the onset of the Asian financial crisis in September 1997, the law constituted a major revision of the overarching legislative framework governing labor under Suharto. The Act drew strong public criticism from labor NGO activists (see, e.g. Amiruddin and Masduki 1997) and was criticized even by the usually compliant SPSI (Ford 2000a, Suwarno and Elliott 2000). Opponents remobilized after Suharto fell, hoping to have it revoked before it went into effect on 1 October 1998 (*Jakarta Post*, 11 June 1998). At the same time, the new Habibie administration was looking for ways to mollify the international actors who had criticized the Suharto regime for its flagrant violations of labor rights. Within weeks of taking office, it ratified ILO Convention No. 87 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to

[2] The next three sections draw on the analysis in Caraway (2004) and Ford (2004).

Organize. Habibie also signaled the new administration's desire to improve its image by releasing imprisoned union leaders, Muchtar Pakpahan and Dita Sari, and responding positively to the ILO's encouragement to move forward with a more ambitious plan of labor law reform. In August 1998, the government invited an ILO Direct Contacts Mission to assist with drafting new legislation. Based on the recommendations of the Ministry of Manpower, the president agreed to postpone the implementation of the Manpower Act for two years, citing concerns of civil society (*Media Indonesia*, 28 August 1998).

Based on the input from the ILO, the Indonesian government set a timetable for the passage of three bills: the Trade Union Act, the Labor Dispute Settlement Act, and the Manpower Development and Protection Act (Boulton 2002). If enacted, these three bills would consolidate the confusing ensemble of labor regulations inherited from the Suharto years and bring Indonesian law into compliance with international labor standards. The ILO worked closely with the Ministry of Manpower to prepare the initial drafts of the new labor legislation, and funded a series of tripartite workshops so that unions and employers would have input into the process (Boulton 1999). The government soon produced the first of the three pieces of legislation, Law No. 21/2000 on Trade Unions, which addressed the most persistent criticisms of ILO reports and provided a legal framework to enforce Convention No. 87 (ILO 1999). A coalition of unions rejected the proposed law outright, and SBSI, the second-largest federation, lobbied to obtain changes to some provisions (Banwell 2001, Wisudo 2000). However, unions ultimately accepted the law without mounting major protests. The third of the three bills to be enacted, Law No. 2/2004 on Industrial Disputes Settlement, was also relatively uncontroversial. The most controversial of the bills was the Manpower Development and Protection Act, which ultimately became Law No. 13/2003 on Manpower. This bill dealt with a number of sensitive issues that were flashpoints of conflict between labor and capital – strikes, severance pay, contract labor, outsourcing, and minimum wages. But before serious discussions could begin, the nation was rocked by its first mass wave of labor protests to occur after the fall of Suharto.

Targeting the Executive

In the midst of Indonesia's recovery from the Asian financial crisis, the Ministry of Manpower quietly issued a new regulation, Ministerial Decree No. 150/2000 on the Settlement of Employment Termination and the Determination of Severance Pay, Long-Service Pay and Compensation in Firms in June 2000. Better known as Kep-150, the decree allowed for more generous severance provisions not only in the case of redundancies, but also in cases of voluntary resignation and dismissal for workplace misdemeanors. This regulation promised to be popular with unions because it provided laid-off workers with better compensation, but at the same time provoked the ire of employers, many of whom were still reeling from the crisis.

The man responsible for the regulation was Minister of Manpower, Bomer Pasaribu, who was also the head of KSPSI and a cadre in the former ruling party, Golkar. Although he knew the decree would be controversial, he considered it to be a necessary stopgap measure to prevent further radicalization of the labor movement.[3] Bomer expected the decree to benefit workers by deterring layoffs and by offering greater compensation to those who lost their jobs. He hoped that this pro-labor measure would pacify workers during this tumultuous period of transition and economic crisis. Although it would be costly to employers, he calculated that in six months, the decree would be made obsolescent by the enactment of the Manpower Development and Protection Act. Predictably, the labor movement vigorously supported Kep-150, while employers responded with dismay (*Hukumonline*, 11 November 2000).

Workers lost their champion when President Abdurrahman Wahid reshuffled his entire cabinet in August 2000, appointing PAN's Hamdi Al Hilal to the post. Wahid announced in November that he had asked the minister to revise the decree because of the "noisy uproar" from Japanese and Korean investors (*Hukumonline*, 11 November 2000). It took six months, however, before the government worked up the nerve to confront the unions. In the face of ongoing pressure from foreign investors, the minister issued Ministerial Decree No. 78/2001 on Changes to Ministerial Decree No. 150/2000 on the Settlement of Employment Termination and the Determination of Severance Pay, Long-Service Pay and Compensation in Firms in early May (*Jakarta Post*, 24 April 2001). With 3000 demonstrators from KSPSI camped outside his office, the minister delayed implementation of the new decree for two weeks in hopes of reaching a compromise with workers and employers (*Jakarta Post*, 17 May 2001). He then released Ministerial Decree No. 111/2001 on Changes to Article 35 of Ministerial Decree No. 78/2001, which did not differ substantially from the previous decree.

Despite the division and fragmentation of Indonesia's labor movement, its many elements came together to make good on their threat to launch massive protests against the measure. KSPSI called a nationwide strike (*Jakarta Post*, 1 June 2001). In Jakarta, workers flooded the streets in front of the presidential palace, demanding that the president revoke the decree (*Kompas,* 12 June 2001). Thousands mobilized in Surabaya and Bandung as well, where they marched on the governor's office calling for the reinstatement of Kep-150 (LIPS 2001). A group of smaller and more radical unions who were part of the 1 May Action Committee (*Komite Aksi Satu Mei*, KASM) also staged sizeable

[3] Interview with Bomer Pasaribu, August 2003. Bomer also believed that ministerial decrees seldom favored workers and that it was past time for there to be a strongly pro-labor decree. "Look at how many business people have served as minister – Abdul Latief, Fahmi Idris, Al Hilal Hamdi. Only I am from labor."

protests (*Hukum Online,* 13 June 2001; *Jakarta Post,* 3 April 2001). These protests were so large and rambunctious that the Wahid administration – already in its dying days – began to reconsider the wisdom of its decision to antagonize the unions. Tripartite discussions were held again, but this time the Coordinating Minister for Political, Social, and Security Affairs was called in to mediate (*Jakarta Post*, 16 June 2001). The fact that the head of the Indonesian military and the chief of the national intelligence agency were also in attendance demonstrated the security apparatus's concern about further protests. But the meeting deadlocked, and unwilling to risk further mass protests, the government revived Kep-150 in its original form in mid-June.[4]

Unions reveled in their victory in this first major confrontation with the state. The labor movement had created chaos in the streets by mobilizing vast numbers of workers in the capital and other urban centers. A strong government might have withstood this pressure from the labor movement for the sake of boosting the country's attractiveness to investors. But as one well-connected consultant to foreign investors observed, the Wahid administration had "bigger fish to fry" (Interview with James Castle, July 2003). Having alienated both the political parties that had backed his presidential bid and the security apparatus, Wahid was impeached by a special session of the People's Consultative Assembly (*Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat*, MPR) and replaced by Vice President Megawati Sukarnoputri in July (Budiman 2001). Undoubtedly reluctant to provide his opponents with more ammunition in the run-up to the special session, the president opted for labor peace. In the next labor reform skirmish, the labor movement would use similar tactics to thwart reforms that it opposed. In this case, however, it targeted the legislature.

Targeting the Legislature

With the dispute over Kep-150 settled in labor's favor, the government moved forward with completing the drafting of the Labor Protection and Development Act and the Industrial Disputes Settlement Act. Whereas the executive branch could decide unilaterally to issue or retract a regulation, to pass laws it needed to secure the approval of the national legislature, which was no longer the toothless body of the Suharto years. In the battle over these laws, the labor movement again deployed its mobilizational power. But in contrast to the previous round of protests, which targeted the executive, its primary focus was now on the legislature. The Megawati administration was eager to complete the labor reform process, and her chances of doing so seemed good. Her party, PDIP, controlled one-third of the seats in the national legislature, which was more than any other party. Although the remaining seats were held by more than a dozen other parties, over 80 percent of seats were controlled by PDIP,

[4] Bomer Pasaribu felt vindicated by the events that ensued after his departure. "When my successor revoked Kep-150, what happened? Riots!" (Interview, August 2003).

Golkar, PKB, and PPP. Although none of these parties were pro-labor, the nonprogrammatic nature of the parties also meant that they were not in principle opposed to labor's policy goals.

Commission VII was the parliamentary commission then responsible for labor affairs. When it solicited input from unions on the Labor Protection and Development Act, it – but also employers and NGOs – strongly criticized the government's draft legislation, requesting that its passage be delayed. KSPSI was the only union to publicly support the bills – no doubt because in August 2001 its chair, Jacob Nuwa Wea, had been appointed Minister of Manpower, and as a PDIP cadre he was keen to move the process along despite the objections of most of the unions (*Tempo Interaktif*, 24 September 2002). Unions rallied once more against the replacement bills as politicians voted to repeal Law No. 25/1997 on Manpower. Many joined together under the banner of the Committee against the Oppression of Workers (*Komite Anti Penindasan Buruh*, KAPB), a coalition of 60 unions and labor NGOs formed with support from the Jakarta Legal Aid Bureau (Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Jakarta, LBH Jakarta) to engage with the labor law reform processes (Ford 2009, Tjandra 2016). Minister Nuwa Wea dismissed the protestors, calling them thugs representing memberless organizations (*Tempo Interaktif*, 24 September 2002). But such was the force of a series of demonstrations that the DPR postponed the enactment of both bills (Caraway 2004, Suryomenggolo 2008).[5]

In an attempt to forestall another wave of protests, the government and the members of Commission VII agreed to authorize Herman Rekso Ageng, a PDIP legislator, to engage unions and employers in bipartite discussions to hammer out the new bills. As not all seventy union federations could participate in the negotiations, Herman gathered dozens of unions together in early October for a discussion, and then invited a number of individuals to participate in bipartite negotiations.[6] Employers and unions met with Herman over a period of several months to work out the details of the law. They were pressed for time, as Megawati's government wanted the legislation completed by February, so they prioritized negotiations for the most controversial and crucial articles pertaining to outsourcing, contract work, strikes, layoffs, and severance pay. The national legislature passed the Manpower Act in late February, and the president signed it into law on 25 March 2003.

[5] Said Iqbal, who was later on the team that redrafted the Labor Protection and Development Act, noted that when unions presented their objections to the special committee on 19 September, legislators listened to their concerns and seemed open to delay. But a plenary meeting of the national legislature had already been scheduled, and such meetings were typically called in order to vote on legislation. Unions, therefore, feared the worst (Interview, July 2003).

[6] This procedure for selecting members was later used by many unions to call the final result into question. However, as Caraway (2004) notes, the claims about lack of representation are often overstated. Most major union federations, as well as representatives from key leftist unions, were involved. The main weakness was the under-representation of the group of unions that went on to form KSPI, of which only FSPMI was included.

Law No. 13/2003 on Manpower was a milestone for the unions. It contained an explicit statement of the right to strike, restrictions on outsourcing, limitations on contract labor, payment of wages during some strikes, a prohibition on replacement workers during legal strikes, higher pay for workers suspended during the labor dispute-resolution process, and higher severance pay. It was also the first time that unions had participated directly in drafting national legislation. They achieved this because labor's large and boisterous protests captured the attention of party leaders in the national legislature, who agreed to slow down the process to reach a compromise. Eager to put an end to the protests and to show their responsiveness to the public, legislators brought unions to the negotiating table despite the minister's lack of enthusiasm for redrafting the law. Numerous unions, including some who participated in the negotiations, later opposed the law and demanded that it be revised (Caraway 2004, Tjandraningsih 2009). As a consequence of the robust participation of major unions in the law's drafting, the ensuing protests were less vigorous and the legislature and government less sympathetic to those demanding that the law be revoked.[7] Ironically, it was the government's initiative to amend the Manpower Act that again brought unions together on the streets.

Stopping the President in His Tracks

The Manpower Act had divided unions, but it united employers in their opposition to the provisions of the law that protected job security. Although employers had not objected strenuously to the Manpower Act at its time of passage, before long they and international investors began to call on the government to amend its labor-friendly provisions on severance allowances, dismissals, and contract labor in order to shore up the investment climate (Ford 2004). The international financial institutions also began to chime in about Indonesia's labor laws, which they claimed were hostile to business (Caraway 2010b).[8] President Yudhoyono responded by issuing Presidential Instruction No. 3/2006 on the Policy Packet for Improving the Investment Climate in February 2006, which targeted five areas including labor reform. The proposed measures would increase labor market flexibility by extending the maximum period of contract work, removing limitations on the kinds of work that could be outsourced, cutting maximum severance and long-service pay, restricting severance pay to workers who earned less than the tax threshold, and dropping the decent living standard as the basis for the minimum wage (Manning and Roesad 2007). According to Yudhoyono, these reforms would

[7] Unions also initiated several judicial reviews, some of which resulted in modifications to the law (Suryomenggolo 2014, 11).

[8] Bambang Widianto, the head of the National Development Planning Agency (*Badan Perenanaan Pembangunan Nasional*, Bappenas), was also an early and vocal critic of several provisions of the Manpower Act (Manning and Roesad 2007).

be advantageous for both workers and employers (*Kompas*, 2 April 2006). Unions opposed the reforms, while employers welcomed the opportunity to weaken provisions pertaining to severance pay, minimum wages, outsourcing, and strikes (*Kompas,* 24 March 2006; *Liputan 6,* 7 April 2006).

Yudhoyono assumed office in October 2004. As the first directly elected president, he was in a stronger position than previous presidents to confront labor, but he needed the legislature's approval in order to amend the Manpower Act. One of sixteen parties in the legislature, his Democrat Party held only 10 percent of seats. Golkar, PDIP, PKB, PPP, PKS, and PAN held a significant proportion of the remainder, and all but PDIP joined his cabinet. Collectively, the seven coalition parties held 73 percent of the seats, which should have been sufficient to advance his legislative agenda. In practice, however, conflict was common within his cabinet and among his coalition partners in the legislature, and coalition parties were not shy about criticizing government policy and often worked to undermine bills supported by government ministers (Aspinall, Mietzner, and Tomsa 2015, Sherlock 2015).

Unpersuaded by Yudhoyono's claim that the reforms would benefit them, unions tried to peel off support for the proposed reforms by mounting a series of escalating protests in major industrial areas throughout Indonesia and especially in Jakarta. The main force behind these protests was the Worker's Challenge Alliance (*Aliansi Buruh Menggugat*, ABM), which, ironically, had been founded as a vehicle for campaigning against the law it was now mobilizing to defend (ABM 2006).[9] ABM was initially a broad coalition of smallish unions that traversed the full length of the ideological spectrum from the National Front for Indonesian Workers' Struggle (*Front National Perjuangan Buruh Indonesia*, FNPBI) and KASBI on the left, to the Indonesian Muslim Workers' Brotherhood (*Persaudaraan Pekerja Muslim Indonesia*, PPMI) on the right. It also included NGOs and other groups concerned with labor issues (Ford 2009). In early April 2006, ABM and the three confederations mobilized tens of thousands of workers on the president's doorstep, rallying at the State Palace and vice-presidential residence in Jakarta, as well as across the country to reject the planned revisions to the law (Sijabat 2006a). The protests bore fruit. Legislators from Golkar, the Justice Party (*Partai Keadilan*, PK), and PDIP began to publicly criticize the government for not consulting sufficiently with unions about the planned revisions and for prioritizing labor reforms over other elements of the economic packet designed to improve the investment climate (*Kompas*, 7 April 2006). After meeting with representatives of the unions, the president promised not to send the bill to parliament before the proposed revisions had been agreed to by members of a tripartite forum (Osman 2006, Susanto et al., 2006).

This step was not enough for the unions, which renewed their threat to mount a national strike unless the government called off plans to revise the

[9] ABM emerged in 2005 out of the People's Challenge Alliance (*Aliansi Rakyat Menggugat*, ARM), the first union-led alliance of the Yudhoyono presidency (Ford 2009).

law (Sijabat 2006b). On May Day 2006, ABM and many of the larger unions turned out on the streets again demanding that the government drop its plans to revise the law. An estimated 100,000 workers participated across Indonesia (*Jakarta Post,* 1 May 2006). In Bekasi alone, tens of thousands of workers marched down the narrow streets in an 8-km long parade (Interview with FSPMI general secretary, June 2006). That evening, leaders of Commission IX, which was now the commission charged with labor affairs, announced that they would reject the planned revisions (*Kompas,* 1 May 2006). On 3 May, members of KSPSI revolted against their central leadership, which had ignored calls from the grassroots to publicly reject the revisions and mounted unruly protests that brought Jakarta to a standstill (Interview with KSPSI leader, July 2006). An estimated 50,000 protestors stormed the national legislature, pelting security personnel with rocks, setting fire to banners and tires, and pushing down its 3-m high steel gate; they dispersed only after security personnel fired tear gas and blasted them with water cannons (*Jakarta Post,* 3 May 2006).

Despite the mayhem on his doorstep, the chair of the national legislature, Golkar's Agung Laksono, was initially opposed to Commission IX's decision to oppose the government's plan to revise the Manpower Act. Their stance, he said, did not mean that the national legislature had rejected the proposed amendments (*Kompas*, 3 May 2006). The government also signaled its dismay at the pushback by some legislators. Yudhoyono asserted that the protests were engineered by forces dissatisfied with the outcome of the 2004 election, a not-so-veiled reference to PDIP, whose leader, former president Megawati, had lost to him in the 2004 election (*Kompas*, 5 May 2006).[10] Vice president Jusuf Kalla publicly insulted Ribka Tjiptaning, a PDIP legislator who had greeted the protesting workers (*Hukumonline*, 5 May 2006). Resistance from legislators became uglier and more public, with an announcement by the PDIP whip that legislators from all parties opposed the bill, which in effect meant that the revisions could not be passed. The vice chair of the legislature goaded Kalla: "Go ahead and submit a draft. If we reject it, what can you do about it?" The whip from PPP backed him up, threatening to call a meeting of the leadership of the national legislature to block the bill. The leaders of the Regional Representative Council (*Dewan Perwakilan Daerah*, DPD) also came out in support of workers.[11] The chair of the legislature soon relented and agreed to reject further deliberations of the amendments (*Hukumonline*, 5 May 2006).

[10] Yudhoyono had served as Megawati's coordinating minister for political and security affairs. Suspicious of his ambitions, she isolated him, prompting his resignation in March 2004, after which he declared his candidacy for the presidency. He trounced her in the second round of the presidential run-off, taking 61 percent of the votes compared to her 39 percent. PDIP chose to go into opposition and refused Yudhoyono's invitation to join his cabinet (Aspinall, Mietzner, and Tomsa 2015).

[11] The Regional Representative Council, which is the second parliamentary chamber, and the People's Representative Council comprise the People's Consultative Assembly. The Regional Representative Council cannot legislate, but it can propose and give advice on bills.

Averse to confrontation and alienating public opinion (Aspinall, Mietzner, and Tomsa 2015), Yudhoyono retreated and aborted the attempt to revise the law (Donnan 2006). But the government had not yet lost its appetite for change and tried twice more – in October 2010 and late 2011 – to amend the Manpower Act. Despite being re-elected in a landslide in 2009, and his Democrat Party riding presidential coattails to become the largest party in the national legislature with 26 percent of the seats, Yudhoyono still needed the support of other parties to move the amendments through the legislative process. But senior legislators, no doubt recalling the tumult of the previous attempt to amend the law, balked at the prospect of hordes of workers descending on the legislature once again. Although Yudhoyono succeeded in getting the law on the legislative agenda in 2010, the legislature quickly removed it when unions responded with demonstrations across Indonesia (*Kabar Bisnis,* 10 November 2010; *Suara Pembaruan,* 16 December 2011). When the government tried again in 2011, sympathetic lawmakers leaked information on planned changes in the law to the unions, which allowed unions to mobilize quickly to derail the process (Interview with PKS legislator, June 2012).

Mobilizing for Pro-labor Reform

These episodes of contentious politics reveal that the labor movement was surprisingly effective in shaping the pathway of post-Suharto labor reform. Unions first mobilized in 2001 to demand the resurrection of Kep-150, and then to thwart the passage of new labor laws in 2002. These protests had impressive results. In the first case, a fragile government revoked subsequent decrees replacing Kep-150 despite strong employer opposition. In the second, unions received a seat at the table in redesigning the bill that ultimately became the new Manpower Act. Although unions disagreed over the final merits of Law No. 13/2003, their direct participation in the process was an important development in Indonesia's democracy, as this was the first time that they had been involved in drafting legislation. The divisions among unions evaporated several years later when the government tried to amend the law, and unions united in the streets once again to derail the government's plans, culminating in a government retreat.

Crucial to these victories was the labor movement's ability to mobilize thousands of protestors in the capital, where national policy was crafted. While mobilization was a necessary condition for this success, certain features of the political opportunity structure at the national level were also important. In the case of Kep-150, the fragility of the Wahid administration in its last year made it less willing to face down masses of protestors. Under the stronger presidencies of Megawati and Yudhoyono, the weak control that they had over coalition partners, especially when faced with thousands of protestors, allowed unions to convince the legislature to act to block presidents. Finally, having a labor leader heading the Ministry of Manpower, in particular during the Wahid administration, resulted in an unanticipated benefit for the labor

movement in the form of Kep-150. But, while the labor movement had proven its capacity to shape policy at the national level through public protests targeting the executive and legislative branches of government, it was less successful in replicating this success at the local level on the core bread-and-butter union issue of wages.

LOCAL POLICY: MINIMUM WAGES

Minimum wages have been a central pillar of labor policy in Indonesia since the early 1990s, when as part of a wider effort to quell labor protest the Suharto regime institutionalized a centralized system in which the national government made regular adjustments to minimum wages (Manning 1998). This system remained in place until authority for minimum wage-setting was devolved to provincial governments in 2000. In the wake of the Asian financial crisis of 1997–98, minimum wage increases were extremely volatile, but they became more stable after 2001, typically hovering around the previous year's inflation rate (Figure 3.1).[12] During this period, real increases were small, and industrial and metropolitan localities in Java fared no better and

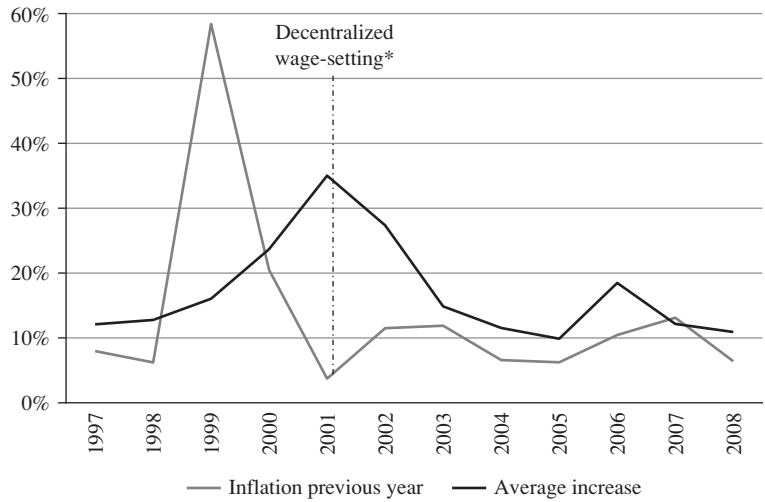

FIGURE 3.1. Average provincial minimum wage increases (%), 1997–2008.
* Authority was transferred to local governments in 2000, but the 2001 minimum wage rates were the first to be set in this new system.

[12] We present provincial data in this figure because until recently, local minimum wages were only negotiated at the district and municipality level in a handful of places outside of Java (e.g. Batam). Many provinces outside of Java also set higher sectoral provincial minimum wages in addition to the base provincial minimum wage.

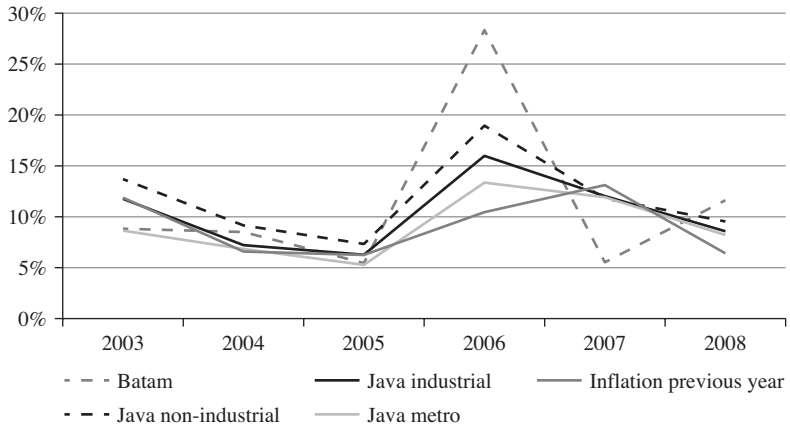

FIGURE 3.2. Average local (municipality and district) minimum wage increases (%), 2003–8.

were often worse than non-industrial areas there (Figure 3.2).[13] As a result, by 2008 minimum wage rates in most localities sat below the government-defined decent living standard.

Given unions' success in shaping the labor reform process at the national level, the meager results on the wage front, even in the industrial areas where they were strongest, are puzzling. The explanation, we argue, is that unions confronted more challenging conditions at the local level. After 2000, minimum wage increases were determined exclusively by local executives, who for the first five years were indirectly elected and, therefore, had little incentive to respond to workers' demands. The legislature played no role in wage-setting, so in order to win big raises, executives would have to be convinced to side with workers in wage negotiations. Even after direct elections were phased in between mid-2005 and the end of 2008, unions were unsuccessful in wresting more generous wage increases from local governments. Unions were unable to use the wage councils to their advantage because they had not yet developed sustained cooperation across organizational divides. The annual wage-setting process demanded a more coordinated approach on the wage councils and in the streets than had been necessary at the national level in the context of legislative reform. This process of local consolidation around minimum wages took time, so it was some years before unions were able to take full advantage of the wage councils. We develop this argument in three parts, analyzing first the brief period of centralized wage-setting from 1998

[13] The metropolitan areas are Greater Jakarta (Bogor municipality and district, Bekasi municipality and district, Depok, and Tangerang municipality and district) and the Ring 1 area around Surabaya (Mojokerto, Sidoarjo, Gresik, and Pasuruan districts).

until 2000, then describing the key elements of the new decentralized wage-setting institutions, and finally explaining why labor initially had such limited success on the new wage councils.

Centralized Wage-Setting in the Aftermath of the Asian Financial Crisis

When the Asian financial crisis struck Indonesia in mid-1997, the economy was swept into a tailspin from which it took years to recover. In the context of capital flight, mass layoffs, and spiraling inflation, the central government's top priorities were to stabilize the economy, deter capital flight, and prevent further layoffs. Just weeks before Suharto resigned in May 1998, his government took action to provide employers some relief by concluding a tripartite agreement – signed by the general chairperson and secretary-general of SPSI on behalf of workers – stipulating that minimum wages would not be increased until the economic situation improved.[14]

Such drastic wage restraint, however, would be difficult to sustain after Suharto's fall. While the interim Habibie administration had the same authority as the Suharto government to set wages, Habibie was more vulnerable to popular pressure than Suharto, and in July the Minister of Manpower approved modest increases averaging 15 percent. But this increase only partially offset the negative impact of inflation on workers' purchasing power. In 1997, minimum wages had met 95.3 percent of a worker's minimum physical requirements but by mid-1998, this fell to just 75.8 percent (*Jakarta Post*, 1 July 1998). Both SPSI and the smaller and feistier independent unions that were part of the Workers' Committee for Reform Action (*Komite Buruh untuk Aksi Reformasi*, Kobar) complained that these increases were insufficient to restore workers' welfare to pre-crisis levels (ACILS 1998b). In an attempt to overcome the continuing economic difficulties, the Habibie government prioritized maintaining employment and reining in inflation, both of which required continued wage restraint, and workers' purchasing power eroded further in 1999 (*Jakarta Post,* 19 February 1999). This policy of wage restraint was abandoned when the popularly elected government led by Abdurrahman Wahid took office in October 1999 (Manning 2004). Responding to calls by unions to resuscitate the flagging value of the minimum wage, the new government reversed course despite the persistent economic crisis.

Workers had mobilized to demand higher minimum wages, but their protests on this issue were not nearly as large or disruptive as later demonstrations surrounding labor law reforms. In fact, the looser wage policy was not a direct response to disruptive mobilizations but rather a pre-emptive move to deter

[14] This agreement sparked an immediate backlash within SPSI, with ten out of thirteen of the sectoral unions in the federation signing a statement that called on the Minister of Manpower to revoke the decision, and to increase minimum wages by at least 20 percent (ACILS 1998a, 1998c).

such mobilizations. Minister of Manpower Bomer Pasaribu – the man who later issued Kep-150 out of fear that mass layoffs would lead to a radicalization of the labor movement – likely also feared the destabilizing effects of starvation wages. Bomer announced that it would be necessary to raise minimum wages in phases to meet the government-defined basic needs standard. Increases inched upwards in 2000, on average reaching 82 percent of the basic needs standard (*Kompas,* 4 February 2000). But soon, the decision as to whether wages ever met this standard would be made by local governments, as authority for setting minimum wages would be transferred to them. This change dramatically shifted the political and strategic terrain on which minimum wage battles were fought.

The New System of Decentralized Wage-Setting

The national government could move seamlessly from controlling wages to letting them rise because authority for minimum wage-setting was vested in the Ministry of Manpower. The minister set minimum wages, typically at the provincial level, after consulting with governors and a 22-member National Wage Research Council (Manning 1998). But, as Indonesia moved forward with decentralization, many government functions were transferred to its provinces, municipalities, and districts. As part of this process, in May 2000 the central government issued Government Regulation No. 25/2000 on the Responsibilities of the Government and the Provincial Government as Autonomous Regions, which devolved decision-making authority in twenty different domains to provincial governments. Minimum wage-setting was included on the long list of responsibilities to be devolved under the regulation.[15] Henceforth, local and provincial tripartite wage councils would meet annually to negotiate minimum wages and to forward their recommendations to mayors, district heads, and governors. In the case of local wage councils, the mayor or district head held the authority to agree to or amend these wage recommendations before forwarding them to governors, who held the final authority to set wages throughout a province.

But while the locus of authority in wage-setting was clear, the precise rules governing the work of the local wage councils were not solidified until the enactment of Law No. 13/2003 on Manpower, and the issuing of the necessary implementing regulations. The Manpower Act set the decent living standard as the benchmark for minimum wages and required that wage councils, consisting of representatives from the government, unions, employers, and universities, advise municipal/district, provincial, and national governments on wage-setting. The composition of the wage councils was firmed up in Presidential Decree No. 107/2004 on Wage Councils, which set a 2:1:1 ratio

[15] In October 2000, the Minister issued a decree to reflect this change and mandated that governors review minimum wages annually. See Ministerial Decree No. KEP-226-MEN/2000 on Changes to Article 1, Article 3, Article 4, Article 8, Article 11, Article 20, and Article 21 of Ministerial Regulation No. PER-01/MEN/1999 on Minimum Wages.

of representation for the government, unions, and employer associations. This configuration meant that government representatives, appointed by the executive, held the decisive votes on the wage council – and could thus determine whether wage recommendations aligned more closely with the desires of employers or unions. The final regulatory pieces to fall into place were the rules for assessing the decent living standard, which was set through Ministerial Regulation No. PER-17/MEN/VIII/2005 on the Components and Staged Implementation of the decent living standard. With these regulations in place, a complete national framework for decentralized wage-setting was established. But whether or not unions would succeed in using these new institutions to win substantial wage increases was another question.

Missed Opportunities: Wage Councils as Institutions of Wage Restraint

At first, the new wage councils looked like they would deliver generous wage increases to workers, as provincial governments initially approved large real raises (Figure 3.1), averaging about 10 percent per year (Bird and Manning 2008, Manning and Roesad 2007). But after 2002, wage restraint was the norm – and, as revealed in Figure 3.2, unions in more densely industrialized regions were unsuccessful in using their mobilizational power to win larger increases. Two questions, therefore, emerge. First, why did decentralized wage-setting deliver mixed results for workers and second, why did unions fail to win larger increases in industrial areas?

Tripartite wage councils gave unions an institutional means to negotiate minimum wages. But to achieve more than modest improvements, unions needed the support of local executives and governors who controlled the government representatives on the wage councils and had the authority to accept or reject recommendations from the councils. The explosion in provincial minimum wages in 2001 and 2002 was partly attributable to interim adjustments made by provincial governments after authority fell into their hands in mid-2000, a step they took in part due to union pleas (*Jakarta Post,* 3 October 2000). But more important than union mobilization at the local level was the commitment of both the Wahid and early Megawati governments to return real wages to pre-crisis levels. Although the central government no longer held authority to determine minimum wages, the Ministry of Manpower issued instructions to governors to set wages based on the basic needs standard (*Kompas,* 9 October 2001).[16] The large increases approved by provincial governments in these first years, therefore, aligned closely with the national government's policy on wages.

After two years of double-digit real minimum wage increases, however, domestic employer associations and foreign chambers of commerce began to complain loudly (Caraway 2004, Ford 2004). The Bali bombing in October 2002, which resulted in the deaths of more than 200 people, created yet more

[16] This standard was determined by a forty-three-item survey carried out by the wage councils.

uncertainty about Indonesia's ability to retain and attract investment, and thus strengthened the hand of those advocating a tighter wage policy. The national government began to signal its desire for wage restraint, and local governments fell in line. Jakarta was the bell-weather for this change in policy. In late October 2002, its wage council announced that it would recommend a modest increase of just 7 percent for 2003, far short of the 25 percent demanded by workers and less than the local inflation rate of 10 percent (*Jakarta Post,* 23 October 2002; *Jakarta Post,* 2 November 2002). Jakarta's example helped to contain wage increases around the country, with average minimum wages at the provincial, district, and municipality levels averaging slightly above the previous year's inflation rate. The national government's continued vigilance in holding the line on wages became apparent in October 2004, when Minister of Manpower Jacob Nuwa Wea, who also headed KSPSI, issued a circular advising workers that there would be no real increase in minimum wages in 2005 (*Jakarta Post,* 13 October 2004) and announcing a two-year delay in implementing the new decent living standard as the basis for the minimum wage. As this new standard was more generous than the previous standard, which referenced basic needs, its application would have resulted in substantial wage increases.

Since the Ministry of Manpower had to issue a regulation to implement this aspect of the law, it had the power to stall the transition to the new standard through ministerial inaction. Local governments and governors could have flaunted the minister's instructions and responded to worker demands for more generous increases – and unions did express their dissatisfaction with paltry raises. For example, they protested in front of the West Java governor's office complaining that wages were lower than the basic needs standard, which the minister had instructed governors to use as the basis for minimum wages (*Jakarta Post*, 23 December 2003).[17] In Batam, workers also rallied in response to the city's miserly wage recommendation and called on the governor to reject it (Fadli 2004). Batam's governor ignored these pleas, as did governors in other parts of the country (Harsanto 2004b, Suwarni 2004).[18] With a 40 percent fuel price hike scheduled for 1 January 2005, workers faced significant erosion in their real wages, but their efforts to sway local executives were largely unsuccessful. One FSPMI leader joked, "Maybe we'll have to put up with starving a little more next year" (Harsanto 2004a).[19] But governors chose to comply with the national government's desire to control wages despite worker pleas to do otherwise.

[17] A Ministry official admitted that on average the minimum wage only fulfilled just 88 percent of the basic needs standard (*Kompas,* 23 December 2003).

[18] The governors of Jakarta and West Java also refused to authorize large raises. The protests in Jakarta were quite small – hundreds of workers – but were larger – thousands – in Bandung, West Java, where protesters damaged the gate of the governor's office.

[19] The unresponsiveness of local governments on wages led many labor advocates to conclude that the wage councils were ineffective (Anarita 2002, Setia 2002, Tjandra, Soraya, and Jamaludin 2007).

Governors chose to do so because they had little to fear from workers even in union-dense areas. Before the introduction of direct elections, an executive's hold on power had more to do with backroom deals cut with the leadership of political parties in the aftermath of legislative elections, and to the sustenance of these relationships to other politicians, than to their responsiveness to voters. In the absence of programmatic commitments to labor and with no accountability to voters, these indirectly elected local executives deferred to the national government when it urged wage restraint. This posture had the added benefit of pleasing employers. And unions, which were still adapting to the new local context and were overwhelmingly focused on labor reform at the national level, did not mount sufficiently large local protests around wages to alter their calculus.

More puzzling is why wage restraint persisted after the onset of direct elections, which should have made local executives in industrial areas more responsive to workers' demands. Local executives could safely ignore unions, even after direct elections were introduced, because they were ill-prepared to take advantage of the opportunity presented by the local wage councils. One factor was that it took five years for the legal framework for wage-setting to coalesce. But equally, if not more important, was the question of labor cooperation at the local level, which was complicated by the thorny issue of labor representation on the wage councils. Under Suharto, determining representation on tripartite committees was straightforward, as there was only one union. But appointing worker representatives to tripartite institutions became a more complex and sensitive task after 1998. Not only were there many more unions, these unions competed with each other for members and often did not get along. They might set aside these rivalries temporarily for short-term reactive mobilizations connected to national developments, but effective participation in this institutionalized setting at the local level would require better coordination across organizational divides.

The Ministry of Manpower tried to assist local governments in navigating this more complex union landscape by setting new rules for determining representation in tripartite committees. Ministerial Decision KEP-20/MEN/2000 on Representation on Industrial Relations Committees set low thresholds for participation on tripartite committees such as the wage councils: at the municipal and district levels, unions only needed to have ten plant-level unions or at least 2500 members to gain a seat (Fitri 2002). This new regulation should have seen many different unions included in the local wage councils, and broadening participation was an essential first step to fostering better cooperation. But until a formal verification of union membership took place – which did not happen until 2005 – it remained unclear how representation on these committees could be fairly determined. Practice, therefore, varied widely from place to place, and KSPSI often continued to dominate the wage councils. Although KSPSI had many dedicated cadres, it was both cautious and protective of its dominance, which other unions resented. The limited

representativeness of many wage councils and their perceived ineffectiveness was, therefore, a source of friction among unions.

These tensions were especially pronounced in places where worker representatives on the wage councils were complicit in holding down wages. In Batam, for example, union leaders on the wage council signed a three-year deal to limit annual wage increases to 2.5 percent per year (Interview with Batam union leader, June 2008). In Bogor, when worker representatives failed to protest after the council voted not to raise wages, others in the labor movement suspected that they were colluding with employers (Abdullah 2003). There, it was not only KSPSI representatives who were problematic, but also a representative from SPN (Interview with Bogor labor activist, June 2005). In Surabaya, allegations of payoffs to worker members on the council swirled among labor activists in the city, with one union alliance, the Workers Anti-Corruption Movement (*Gerakan Buruh Anti Korupsi*, Gebrak), reporting that it saw council members accept bribes (Dhamayanti n.d.). In Medan, smaller unions gained entry onto tripartite committees but were always outnumbered by KSPSI because the government just accepted their self-reported figures.[20] As a disgruntled activist observed, "SPSI gets more members than us and they almost always just agree with the government and employers" (Interview with KSBSI activist, July 2003).

With time, however, representation on the wage councils became more diverse, which in turn stimulated greater cooperation across organizational divides. In Bogor district, KSPSI held only one out of ten seats in 2005 – no doubt a result of the wage scandal in 2002 and the pushback it prompted from a coalition of unions there. In Bandung municipality, Gresik district, and Bekasi municipality, KSPSI representatives also comprised one-third or fewer of the members. By contrast, it held five out of thirteen seats in Sidoarjo district, four out of eleven seats in Bekasi district, and five out of eight seats in Tangerang district. The effectiveness of cooperation among unions on wage councils across localities also varied dramatically. In Serang district, for example, union activists thought that KSPSI was too "moderate," so the representatives from other unions teamed up against them (Interview with SPN leader, April 2005). This was the case sometimes even in localities in close proximity to each other: "Bandung municipality is pretty good. The team works well together, even SPSI. But in Bandung district, SPSI is more dominant and does not want to work with the other unions" (Interview with Garteks activist, May 2005).

Given that worker representatives on the councils needed to strategize together, these transition pains hampered their effectiveness. Replacing weak worker representatives with those who would be more tenacious, and then developing habits of cooperation among the many unions that eventually sat on them, took time. And until these problems were worked out, it was

[20] In 2003, KSPSI controlled five out of seven seats in North Sumatra (Interview with KSPSI leader, July 2003).

difficult for the labor movement to adopt a more offensive – and strategic – posture on minimum wages. The formation of inter-union alliances was an important step in this direction. Unions throughout Indonesia increasingly coalesced into local and regional coalitions as a means to strengthen their cooperation around wage struggles. In the Medan area, for example, unions formed a new alliance – the North Sumatra Workers Advocacy Network (Jaringan Advokasi Buruh Sumut, Jabsu) – which they hoped would formalize cooperation and make it more permanent (Interview with FSP TSK branch leader, July 2003). There were also loose coalitions of unions forming in the Jakarta area, Bogor, Deli Serdang, Bandung, Central Java, and East Java as early as 2003. As one expert observer described, these alliances were "loose and tactical. The cooperation among them so far tends to involve short-term, spontaneous responses to specific problems rather than long-term and strategic cooperation" (Abdullah 2003, 10). These local alliances and networks were indeed ad hoc, but with time they became semi-institutionalized. For example, in Gresik, unions formed the Joint Union Secretariat (*Sekretariat Bersama Serikat Pekerja Serikat Buruh*, Sekber), an alliance that included all of the major unions in the district. This cooperation was not always welcomed by higher-level union officials: one KSPSI leader in Gresik noted that they had been scolded by the provincial leadership of the confederation, which still had the mentality that they did not need to cooperate with other unions, for joining Sekber (Interview, Gresik June 2007).

Some signs of what might be possible with stronger coordination were evident in 2006, when unions won more generous real wage increases averaging about 10 percent on Java. This favorable outcome was in part a result of fiercer contention by unions in the negotiations in late 2005. On the heels of two fuel price increases that year, unions around the country made more vocal demands for large increases to compensate for the low raise the previous year and the fuel price hikes. Also important was that in August 2005 the Ministry of Manpower finally issued the ministerial regulation on the decent living standard, so the market surveys that informed wage negotiations would now be conducted using this measure. Local networks of unions took advantage of the new regulation to demand the substantial increases required to align wages more closely with the decent living standard. Protests were especially militant and sustained in East Java, where the Workers' Challenge Coalition (Koalisi Buruh Menggugat, KBM) mobilized more than 10,000 workers from 24 unions to descend on the governor's office, demanding that he revise minimum wages upward; they tore down the fence around his office and were dispersed with water cannons (Nugroho 2006). These protests were unusual in that they brought together both the large mainstream unions and the smaller and more radical unions (Interview with labor activist, May 2007). The governor responded by raising minimum wages upward slightly in twelve localities (*Radar Bromo,* 30 January 2006). In Bandung, workers knocked down the gate to the governor's office and thousands rallied

in Medan (*Detik,* 10 September 2006; *Suara Merdeka,* 18 December 2006). Meanwhile, in Batam, where unions cooperated in wage negotiations for the first time, they prevailed on the governor to raise the minimum wage by a whopping 28 percent (Fadli 2005). Here, unions took advantage of the electoral cycle, as three out of six localities in the province – Batam, Karimun, and Natuna – were scheduled to have their first direct elections for district head or mayor in early 2006.

With the exception of 2006, however, worker mobilization around minimum wages at the local level was much more subdued than the massive demonstrations surrounding legislative reforms. One reason for this, of course, is that unions from multiple districts and municipalities surrounding Jakarta converged on the capital at key moments. Protests targeting local and even provincial governments would have difficulty matching these numbers. Yet, even when taking the smaller geographic scale into account, the number of participants in protests around minimum wages during this period typically numbered in the hundreds, not the thousands. In later years, however, local networks of unions routinely mobilized far greater numbers. Here, the evolving context at the local level was important. Given the large numbers of unions and the initial dominance of the legacy union on the councils, it took time for unions to make the organizational and strategic adaptations necessary to take advantage of political opportunities opened up in this new setting. Consequently, even in Jakarta and major industrial areas such as Tangerang and Batam, wages remained below the decent living standard (*Thomson Financial,* 27 November 2007).[21]

In order to make district heads, mayors, and governors respond to their demands – that is, to leverage the wage councils and candidate's electoral incentives to win bigger wage increases – unions needed to develop stronger habits of sustained cooperation and joint mobilization at the local level. Without this, local governments had weak incentives to grant more generous wage increases. After a decade of democracy, unions had yet to find a successful strategy for leveraging minimum wage institutions to deliver sustained improvements to workers' standard of living. But by forming local alliances and placing stronger worker representatives on the wage councils, they were better positioned to exploit direct elections to transform the wage councils from institutions of wage restraint into institutions that delivered substantial real wage increases to workers.

CONCLUSION

In the first decade after Suharto's fall, Indonesia's small and diverse labor movement repeatedly united in the streets to shape the labor reform process. While it was surprisingly successful in this endeavor at the national level, it

[21] In Central Java, not a single municipality or district met the standard; in West Java it was achieved in only three out of twenty-five localities.

was less successful in advocating locally for increases in the minimum wage. We attribute the comparative success of labor's policy engagements at the national level to several factors. First and most importantly, the primary arena of action for labor law reform – the labor movement's national policy focus in this period – was in Greater Jakarta, which also happened to have a huge concentration of industrial employment. Unions could, therefore, mobilize thousands of workers to converge on the capital to exert pressure on both the executive and legislative branches of government. Second, conditions during this period were relatively favorable for the use of mass mobilization as a tool for influencing policy. Although unions did not have partisan allies in government, all governments needed to be somewhat responsive to societal demands in the newly democratic context. No other social actor organized such large demonstrations during this period. When faced with mass protest, weak presidents backed down (Wahid), while stronger presidents compromised (Megawati) or were thwarted by coalition partners in the legislature (Yudhoyono). Additionally, during some years the labor portfolio was held by a union official, which gave unions direct access to the government.

By contrast, unions were less successful at the local level, where the most important issue facing the labor movement was minimum wages. Here, the political terrain was less familiar and the political opportunity structure more closed. After decades of highly centralized rule under Suharto, decentralization created a new political landscape that unions had to learn to navigate. Not only did wage institutions undergo dramatic changes, but so too did political institutions, and it took time for the unions to learn and adapt. The initial system of indirect elections also gave local executives minimal incentives for responding to pressure from workers, which in any case was typically less intense than at the national level. The shift to direct elections created the potential for unions to exert pressure on local executives, but they needed to bolster their negotiating power on the wage councils and their mobilizational power on the streets – both of which required sustained inter-union cooperation – to convince local executives to side with them in wage negotiations. With time, representation on the wage councils became more diverse, and unions formed coalitions, which would allow them to assume the offensive posture necessary to exploit the political opportunities at the local level in the future. At the national level as well, unions began to expand their tactical repertoire from defensive mobilizations to thwart reforms that they opposed to a more offensive orientation in which they began to advance a legislative agenda and to connect local and national struggles.

4

Shifting to Offense

After the 2009 presidential election, unions and their allies began to articulate a more forceful labor agenda, by mounting a dynamic and highly effective national campaign for a social security law, and energizing struggles at the local level around minimum wages and outsourcing. In contrast to the previous period, when the labor movement responded to government initiatives, now the government – both local and national – was forced to react to labor's agenda. This more offensive posture paid off: the legislature passed the social security law, minimum wages surged upward, and unions secured stronger regulations that further restricted outsourcing. Key to these successes was the development of a more sophisticated repertoire that more deliberately combined mass mobilization with other tactics.

At the national level, unions continued to deploy the familiar tactic of mass mobilization to exert pressure on legislators to side with them against the government, and to convince the national government to use its power to issue decrees to create stronger protections for workers. But they also learned how to lobby more effectively, generate favorable media attention for their causes, and leverage judicial institutions to complement the tried and true tactic of street mobilization. At the local level, having consolidated their networks and their position on the wage councils, unions were poised to embark on an unprecedented round of locally focused mobilizations. By stepping up their contentiousness, unions were able to more effectively exploit the opportunities presented by direct local and provincial executive elections. Unions began to leverage the electoral cycle to win larger wage increases and in turn harnessed regional patterns of wage-setting to create cascade effects that resulted in widespread wage gains. By creating significant disruption in several core industrial areas and by strengthening the coordination between the confederations at the national level, unions not only strengthened their ability to develop a national strategy on wages, but they also nationalized local

conflicts and won support from the national government for higher wages and reduced outsourcing. Even after this support evaporated, unions in some parts of Indonesia managed to sustain substantial real minimum wage increases by falling back on their strong local and regional networks.

THE SOCIAL SECURITY PROVIDERS ACT

In the waning days of the Megawati Sukarnoputri government, Indonesia's legislature passed an ambitious piece of legislation that, if implemented, would overhaul Indonesia's system of social security.[1] Law No. 40/2004 concerning the National Social Security System replaced a fragmented system that left millions without coverage. It included five complementary social security programs (for healthcare, occupational accidents, old-age pensions, and death) that extended the system's coverage to all Indonesians, to be financed by employers, employees, and the government, which would subsidize coverage for the poor. The law itself did little more than establish basic principles. To bring it into full force, the government needed to draft, and the national legislature to pass, the implementing legislation that would specify how the principles of the social security system would be achieved.

Elements within the labor movement played a central role in advancing Law No. 24/2011 on Social Security Providers, the law that brought this new system into being. Unlike their mobilization around previous laws and regulations – even the 2003 Manpower Act – unions were not simply reacting to government proposals but were participating in the initiation of new legislation. In other words, they assumed a more offensive stance in which they were actively advocating for their own agenda. Their advocacy for this law entailed the deployment of a sophisticated range of tactics, combining mobilization in the streets with lobbying, lawsuits, and stronger alliances with civil society organization. As before, they also needed the support of politicians from the president's party and the government's coalition partners in the legislature to advance their agenda. And, as before, the weak control that presidents had over allied legislators created an opportunity for unions to deploy their newly extended repertoire of action to peel away support.

Securing the legislature's support would be challenging, as the Yudhoyono government was unenthusiastic about the 2004 law and had not taken the necessary steps to bring implementing legislation to parliament. Its opposition was based on several factors. The government maintained that Indonesia had insufficient infrastructure and budgetary resources for such an ambitious system of social insurance. Perhaps equally important was the fear of losing revenue from the state-owned enterprises that ran the existing public schemes. If the law were to be implemented, the government could no longer tap into

[1] This section draws on data provided in Cole (2012), Cole and Ford (2014), Jung (2016), Tjandra (2011), and Wisnu (2012).

these resources. Those running the existing schemes, as well as private insurance companies, also opposed the law. Although it is typically the government that proposes draft laws to parliament (Sherlock 2010), opposition legislators decided to invoke their right to initiate legislation to circumvent the government's inaction. The main impetus behind this effort was the PDIP, the party of former President Megawati, who had lost to Yudhoyono in the 2004 and 2009 presidential races. Since 2004, PDIP had positioned itself as the main opposition to the government. As president, Megawati had strongly supported the 2004 law, so PDIP legislators submitted a bill when the Yudhoyono government failed to bring forward implementing legislation in its first term.

It was at this stage that unions began to organize. Eight national unions, including FSPMI, KASBI, KSBSI, SPN, and KSPSI's chemical, energy, and mining union, (*Federasi Serikat Pekerja Kimia, Energi dan Pertambangan*–KSPSI, FSPKEP–KSPSI) met in early March 2010 to support the legislative effort. Surya Tjandra, a long-time activist from the Trade Union Rights Centre (TURC), was also present. Along with several other unions, these organizations formed the Action Committee for Social Security Reform (*Komite Aksi Jaminan Sosial*, KAJS) the following month.[2] Initially, unions sought merely to amend a pre-existing law governing the Workers Social Security (*Jaminan Sosial Tenaga Kerja*, Jamsostek) program. But, with encouragement from allies in the international labor movement, the discussion shifted to focus on universal social security that would also cover the many Indonesians who worked in the informal sector (Interview with KAJS steering committee member, September 2014). This shift in focus proved controversial, and two groups of unions split away from KAJS. The first consisted of mainstream unions such as SPN and KSBSI, which argued that the decision to broaden the campaign's focus beyond private sector workers was a betrayal of their members' interests.[3] The second involved a number of small leftist unions and labor NGOs, which believed that the government alone should foot the bill for the scheme.

[2] KAJS emerged out of failed attempts to form an organization that unified the three large confederations. In late November 2009, KSBSI initiated the Trade Union Meeting for Political Consensus (TUMPOC), which was organized jointly with KSPI and KSPSI, and supported financially by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (*Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung*, FES) and the Solidarity Center (Observer participation, November 2009). They hoped to unify the labor movement behind a shared agenda. Participants formed the National Assembly Forum (Forum Rembug Nasional, FReN) in February 2010. FReN collapsed after a number of federations broke away to form KAJS. These federations had concerns over FReN's leadership structure, which gave confederation leaders control over the organization; some federations also had issues with the sources of operational funds. FES continued to support KAJS, but Solidarity Center did not (Tjandra 2016).

[3] Tjandra (2014) suggests that the leaders of these organizations, along with Syukur Sarto, opposed the bill because they stood to lose out financially if the state-owned enterprise that managed the Jamsostek scheme lost control of the funds. Leaders of these unions sat on the Jamsostek board.

KAJS made up for these defections by embracing other elements of the labor movement, as well as non-union organizations including farmers' and fishers' alliances, and a network of NGOs concerned with the rights of domestic workers. Several prominent national NGOs, including Indonesian Corruption Watch and the Urban Poor Consortium, also joined the alliance. While the input of these NGOs was limited, their involvement was symbolically important, as it transformed the coalition into a broad-based social movement. Ultimately, sixty-seven civil society organizations were represented in KAJS. However, FSPMI carried most of the financial burden for the campaign and provided most of the demonstrators for its street-based protests. According to a representative of another union in the coalition, "If there hadn't been FSPMI, KAJS wouldn't have had the same impact, especially on the streets" (Interview with OPSI official, September 2014).

In addition to this more wide-ranging membership, KAJS distinguished itself from previous joint projects in that it adopted a more sophisticated political strategy called concept-lobby-action (*konsep-lobi-aksi,* KLA). KAJS' members formulated a concept for the social security law, but they needed allies in the legislative branch to make it a reality. They forged partnerships with individual politicians and academics who could help them to advance their legislative agenda. In this, their natural allies were pro-worker legislators, especially those within PDIP. Particularly important was the partnership with Rieke Diah Pitaloka, a PDIP legislator and former television star. Rieke worked with other sympathetic legislators – Ribka Tjiptaning and Surya Chandra Surapaty from PDIP; Anshori Siregar, Indra, and Matri Agung from the Prosperous Justice Party (*Partai Keadilan Sejahtera*, PKS); and PAN's Hang Ali Saputra Syah Pahan – to assist the coalition's lobbying team to formulate a draft law. Rieke also participated in KAJS events aimed at raising unionists' awareness of the importance of universal social security.

KAJS utilized three different tactics to push the legislation forward. First, it monitored developments in the legislature closely so that it could keep pressure on individual legislators, in particular, those on the special committee responsible for the bill. So involved were KAJS members in this task that they attracted the moniker "balcony fraction" (*fraksi balkon*) because of the frequency with which they disrupted proceedings. Sympathetic legislators supported KAJS by facilitating access to the national legislature, notifying them about relocated meetings, and arranging for television monitors to be placed outside of closed meetings so that KAJS could observe the proceedings from outside the room (Cole 2012). KAJS supported their allies in the legislature by sending text messages to them during the debate. Members of the coalition utilized social media to publicize the phone numbers of legislators who blocked debate or expressed opposition; these legislators were bombarded with text messages encouraging them to support the bill.

Second, KAJS filed a citizen's lawsuit against the president, vice president, and the ministers with responsibilities related to the social security law,

accusing them of breaching the Constitution by not implementing the 2004 law. This lawsuit, filed in June 2010, was designed to increase pressure on the government and to forestall further delays.[4] There was some urgency in moving the process forward quickly as, according to parliamentary rules, bills initiated by legislators can only be debated for two sessions with two possible extensions in exceptional circumstances. If the bill did not pass within this timeframe, advocates would have to start over after the 2014 election. The government filed a written rejection of the citizen's lawsuit, but the court agreed to hear the case. The weekly court sessions received significant media coverage, which also helped to better inform the public about social security, and to keep the spotlight on the government's stonewalling.

Third, to sway undecided or recalcitrant party leaders, attract public interest, and push the deliberations forward, KAJS organized numerous protests, both large and small. For example, in the lead up to the plenary session – in which all party fractions had to agree to put the bill on the legislative agenda – KAJS held a series of rallies around Indonesia. On May Day in 2010, some 150,000 workers turned out in Jakarta (Tjandra 2014). Social security was a key theme that year and in 2011, when tens of thousands of workers demanded that the government immediately ratify the draft implementing law in May Day protests across the country (*Hukum Online,* 1 May 2011). The following month, hundreds of workers walked the 250 km from Bandung to the Presidential Palace in Jakarta to present a petition with 50,000 signatures demanding that the law be passed. Workers also staged smaller and strategic actions at key points in the negotiations. For example, on 29 July about 200 workers protested in front of the national legislature to demand that Commission IX's recommendations be incorporated into a draft law (*Detik News,* 29 July 2010).

The first hurdle was cleared in April 2010, when the legislature held its opening plenary session. All parties had to vote in favor of allowing the bill to be considered in the upcoming session, which was far from a certainty given the government's opposition. To sway undecided party leaders, unions held a series of rallies across Indonesia in conjunction with the opening of the plenary session in Jakarta. Once the bill was on the legislature's agenda, it was necessary to keep the pressure on so that the law could pass within the allotted time. But because of the government's opposition to the bill, it proceeded very slowly in the national legislature. The government stalled progress by sending the wrong people to hearings, canceling meetings, refusing to negotiate on some provisions of the bill, and even demanding that the 2004 law be amended before it would discuss the implementing legislation. Ministers changed positions from one meeting to the next, making it difficult to reach a compromise (*Kompas,* 22 July 2011). Such was the frustration of legislators on the special committee charged with drafting the bill that they sought an

[4] Within KAJS, the TURC held primary responsibility for the legal aspects of this strategy.

audience with Yudhoyono's former vice president, Jusuf Kalla, who had also served as Megawati's Minister of People's Welfare and had thus played an important role in crafting the 2004 law. After meeting with six legislators from PDIP, PKS, Gerindra, PAN, and PKB in May 2011, the former vice president urged the government to stop putting up roadblocks to the bill (*Kompas,* 14 May 2011). The government nevertheless continued to stall.

However, victory in the citizen's lawsuit put further pressure on the government. After some twenty-seven hearings, the court ruled in the coalition's favor on 13 July 2011. The verdict received extensive media coverage in both regional and Jakarta-based newspapers, where it was reported as a significant victory for the coalition. It arrived just before the national legislature was to vote to extend discussions of the bill. After three sessions, the national legislature and the government could still not reach an agreement, and if this extension was not granted, the bill could not be considered again until after the next election. At this session, Golkar's Priyo Budi Santoso, a vice chair of the national legislature, criticized the government for protracting negotiations, asserting that all of the fractions were ready to pass the bill. He added a veiled threat: "If the government continues to stall negotiations, we will let the public know who is responsible for the delay. But I believe that things will be sorted out in the next session since the president has said that he will instruct ministers to focus on this bill" (*Kompas,* 21 July 2011). PKS's Zuber Safawi, vice chair of the special committee, echoed Priyo's comments, lamenting the government's poor coordination, noting that the finance minister had already agreed with the legislature on one sticking point, only to have the minister of state enterprises reject it, derailing the agreement reached between the special committee and the government on 28 May. He warned, "There can be no more excuses. BPJS has to be passed before this session is over" (*Kompas,* 22 July 2011).

KAJS immediately mobilized its members after the national legislature voted to grant proponents one last chance to pass the bill. In late July, 300 people camped out at the national legislature and thousands protested in support of the bill (*Suara Pembaruan*, 22 July 2011). With protestors bellowing outside the building, national legislature Chair Marzuki Alie from Yudhoyono's Democrat party met with representatives from KAJS. Along with two PKS and the Democrat leaders on the special committee, he signed an agreement in which they promised to complete discussions of the bill in time for the plenary session at the end of October (*Kompas,* 22 July 2011). Aware of the government's continued resistance, unions ramped up their protests, culminating in a large demonstration on 28 October, the last possible day of debate for the law.[5] Some 30,000 people gathered outside the national legislature,

[5] The government had canceled a 21 October meeting with the special committee because the president was reshuffling the cabinet and forbade ministers from making major decisions.

demanding that the law be passed (*Suara Pembaruan,* 28 October 2011). Having learned that two fractions were continuing to oppose it, protestors broke down the gate and entered the complex. That night, protest turned into celebration when Rieke and her colleague, Ribka Tjiptaning, emerged to announce that the bill had become law (*Detik News,* 28 October 2011).[6]

The passage of the social security law was a significant moment for Indonesia's labor movement.[7] Not only did KAJS surmount government opposition, but the final law included about 80 percent of its demands (Cole and Ford 2014). Even more importantly, it proved that unions could move beyond their reliance on street-based mobilizations to deploy a much more sophisticated array of tactics – and do so in a highly coordinated fashion. The success of the campaign and the citizen's lawsuit generated greater confidence – and momentum – for the labor movement (Interview with Said Iqbal, June 2012). Indeed, even labor leaders who opposed KAJS concede that it "played a role" not only in pushing the law through but in increasing the bargaining power of the labor movement (Interview with SPN official, February 2012). The labor movement had shown that it could formulate an offensive strategy, execute it, and win, even when the government opposed it. At the local level, unions also began to demonstrate greater tactical creativity and agility, resulting in a reversal of many years of wage restraint.

CONNECTING LOCAL AND NATIONAL STRUGGLES

Unions initially failed to exploit the opportunities presented by decentralized minimum wage councils and direct elections for local executives, but beginning in 2011, they successfully transformed the councils into institutions that delivered significant real wage gains (Figure 4.1). Workers in industrial and metropolitan localities led the way and secured the largest raises, but by 2013, wages in non-industrial areas also surged. The impetus for the reversal of wage restraint began at the local level, where local and regional networks of unions mobilized in a more coordinated and sustained fashion, exploiting election cycles and regional patterns of wage setting. Increased contentiousness around wages intensified confrontation with employers and unleashed massive demonstrations in several key industrial areas. These mobilizations not only generated favorable responses from local governments but also from the national government, which encouraged local governments to approve more

[6] Presidents do not hold veto authority in Indonesia, so the bill would have become law regardless of whether the president signed it or not. He did, however, sign it on 29 November.

[7] This is not to suggest that the law was perfect. While undoubtedly a historic milestone, it left many issues unresolved. Before disbanding, KAJS formed a committee called Social Security Providers Watch (*Badan Pelayanan Jaminan Sosial*, BPJS Watch) to monitor the implementation of the law. BPJS Watch effectively collapsed as the rift emerged between KSPI and the other confederations in 2013; however, implementation continued to be a focus for the former members of KAJS and their opponents from 2012 to at least 2016.

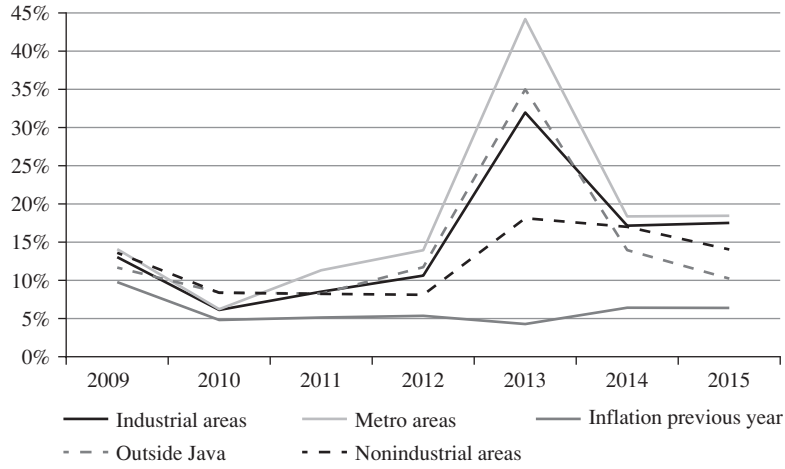

FIGURE 4.1. Average increase in local minimum wages (UMK), 2009–15.

generous wage increases. At the same time, the major confederations began to coordinate more strongly around minimum wages, effectively linking local struggles through a national strategy to drive wages ever higher. Thus, during this period, local and national campaigns on the wage front were more strongly intertwined than before, and unions had learned to be much savvier in exploiting local and regional political opportunities.

The Role of Contentious Politics

By 2009, unions around Indonesia had strengthened their representation and coordination at the local level and begun to mobilize on a large scale around wages in industrial and metropolitan areas. A key element of their strategy was campaigning around the decent living standard. A study by the NGO Akatiga had shown that even wages at the decent living standard on average met less than 50 percent of a single worker's basic needs, with a wider gap for workers with dependents (Tjandraningsih and Herawati 2009). Yet, despite the inadequacies of the decent living standard, most localities still set the minimum wage below it. In 2010, only seven of thirty-eight districts in East Java, eight of twenty-six in West Java, and three of thirty-five in Central Java met the standard. Minimum wages in major industrial areas and cities such as Tangerang municipality and district, Bekasi municipality and district, Karawang, Jakarta, Gresik, and Batam did not meet the standard. Moreover, unions in industrial areas that had once won minimum wages in line with the standard could not take this achievement for granted. For example, in Bekasi district, the minimum wage was equal to or greater than the decent living standard in 2006, 2007,

and 2008, but then fell below it in 2009 and 2010. In Medan, the minimum wage was above the standard in 2007 and 2008, then fell below it in 2009.

By January 2012, increased contentiousness had resulted in minimum wages in most major cities and industrial areas meeting or exceeding the decent living standard. In the years prior to this wave of protests, the Yudhoyono government had pushed governments to hold the line on wages. Fearing that local executives would respond to a large fuel price increase, the government issued a joint ministerial decree urging them not to approve minimum wage increases in excess of the rate of economic growth (Witular and Krismantari 2008). However, this ministerial decree was not binding, and unions pushed ahead with their campaign. Crucial for union efforts to raise the minimum wage was the market survey that determined the decent living standard. Wage council discussions had previously relied primarily on macroeconomic data, such as the inflation rate, to set wages rather than the market surveys that determined the local threshold for the decent living standard (Tjandra 2016). Predictably, wage increases closely followed inflation. Now, in addition to demanding more careful and detailed market surveys as the foundation of wage-setting, unions increasingly conducted rival surveys and went public with the results as a means to hold wage councils accountable.

During these protests, unions highlighted the hardships workers experienced on wages below the decent living standard. A protestor in Jakarta lamented, "With so little money, we struggle to pay for our rent, electricity, and meals" (*Republika,* 9 December 2009). Workers noted the injustice and hypocrisy of paying workers less than what the government itself had defined as a wage sufficient to live a decent life (*CyberNews*, 4 October 2011). Protestors in Karawang, an industrial town about 30 km from Jakarta, told the press that "Workers have never enjoyed a decent wage because the minimum wage has always been set below the decent living standard. How can we live decent lives if the minimum wage is below this standard?" (Kurniawan 2011b). Unions also emphasized the government's legal obligations: "The legal standard for decent wages is the decent living standard, so why is the minimum wage below it?"(Kurniawan 2011a). They put the blame squarely on local governments for their callous disregard for worker welfare (*Antara*, 4 November 2010).

Through their collective efforts in the 2010–11 round of negotiations, local and regional networks of unions succeeded in closing the gap between the minimum wage and the decent living standard in those industrial and metropolitan areas where the gap was small. For example, in Bekasi municipality and district, local wage councils submitted wage recommendations equal to the standard, which local executives and the governor subsequently approved. In others, such as Tangerang municipality and district, unions put pressure on incumbent governors who were running for re-election to issue new wage approvals that raised the minimum wages to meet or exceed the standard

(KSPSI Tangerang 2011).[8] In the Surabaya metropolitan area, minimum wages in four out of five localities were set equal to or above the decent living standard.[9] But in some important industrial and metropolitan centers, including Jakarta and the Batam free trade zone, minimum wages inched toward but remained well below the standard at 85.5 percent and 91.5 percent, respectively (Hasbullahi 2010, Soebijoto 2010). Negotiations were especially contentious in Batam, where unions agreed to a compromise figure below the standard, but with the condition that the next year's minimum wage would be at least equal to it (*Tribun Batam*, 23 November 2010). That year, industrial and metropolitan areas won larger average increases than non-industrial and non-metropolitan areas, illustrating that unions were finally beginning to use their collective power more effectively at the local level.

In the following year, unions continued to work to attain or exceed the decent living standard. Labor's more tenacious demands intensified pressure on local governments and ignited conflict with employers, resulting in a series of massive protests that paralyzed several key industrial areas. Conflict erupted first in Batam after employers refused to abide by the previous year's agreement to set the minimum wage equal to or above the decent living standard; riots shut down the city for two days (Ford 2013, 2014). Police responded with tear gas, driving protestors away from the city government offices. Workers fanned out into the city, destroying police posts and engaging in skirmishes with the police. The mayor relented and sent a wage recommendation that was equal to the decent living standard to the governor (*Haluan Kepri,* 24 November 2011; *Haluan Kepri,* 25 November 2011). Dissatisfied, unions pressed the governor to raise it further, threatening to mobilize again if their demands went unmet. The governor invited the city's wage council to revise the figure upward, which it did, over the protests of employers (*Tribun Batam*, 6 December 2011), bringing Batam's minimum wage to 107 percent of the decent living standard (*Antara*, 14 December 2011).

Weeks later, labor protest erupted around wage-setting in Bekasi and Tangerang, the industrial centers to the east and west of Jakarta.[10] In Bekasi district, the district head, Sa'dudin, was up for re-election in March 2012.

[8] Unions in Sukabumi district also signed a political contract with an incumbent district head during his re-election bid, in which he agreed to set the minimum wage equal to the decent living standard. See Tjandra (2016).

[9] Only Gresik's minimum wage did not meet the decent living standard. There, the district head had honored a political contract in which he pledged that Gresik's minimum wage would be at least as high as Surabaya's. The governor, meanwhile, had indicated that Surabaya, the provincial capital, must have the highest minimum wage. But Surabaya's decent living standard was set lower than Gresik's. Labor activists questioned the validity of Surabaya's survey (*Tempo,* 11 November 2010), but the governor set Gresik's minimum wage equal to Surabaya's anyway, even though this figure was slightly below Gresik's decent living standard (*Kompas,* 19 November 2010; *Radar Gresik*, 25 November 2010; *Politik Indonesia*, 22 December 2010; *Surabaya Kita,* 28 December 2010).

[10] The next four paragraphs draw on Caraway and Ford (2014).

Although he had not been a labor ally during his time in office, he faced what looked to be a close race in a union-dense district. In a last-ditch effort to win labor votes, his administration supported the unions in the 2011–12 wage negotiations. Outraged employers walked out of the negotiations, but the governor, who was from the same party as Sa'dudin, approved the council's recommendation of around 110 percent of the decent living standard. Seeing the much larger minimum wage increase in Bekasi district, unions in Bekasi municipality mobilized to urge the mayor to approve an upward revision in his wage recommendation to the governor. The interim mayor relented and approved a minimum wage worth 109 percent of the decent living standard. When employers challenged the validity of these increases in court, unions responded by mounting a series of protests that jammed the toll road between Jakarta and Bandung and shut down industrial zones throughout the district, with the largest protest occurring after the court ruled in favor of employers' association on 27 January 2012.[11]

The mass mobilization in Bekasi was a response to employers' attempt to circumvent the wage council's recommendation; by contrast, labor unrest in Tangerang was a reaction to an unexpectedly high increase in the minimum wage in neighboring Jakarta. Jakarta's governor, Fauzi Bowo, made a re-election bid in July 2012. In past years, he had ignored union demands, but the looming election made him more responsive. Negotiations that year were especially tense with outraged workers locking the wage council members in the meeting room after they approved a decent living standard deemed to be too low. Amid threats of massive protests, the wage council revised the figure upward, which the governor approved. This 19 percent rise was much higher than expected, which proved to be extremely disruptive in neighboring Tangerang, where wages were historically closely tied to Jakarta's (Interviews with Tangerang union leaders, May 2012).

Tangerang's minimum wage negotiations had been relatively placid before Jakarta announced its increase. Wage councils had recommended minimum wages that met the decent living standard, and the governor had already approved them. But on hearing the news from Jakarta, Tangerang's unions changed tack and demanded an upward revision of the minimum wage. In Tangerang municipality, unions called on Mayor Wahidin to honor his promise to unions in the 2008 mayoral race that Tangerang's minimum wage would not be lower than Jakarta's, a pledge that he had kept in the past. Although Tangerang's major unions had not backed him in that year's acrimonious Banten gubernatorial race, he nevertheless responded to an alliance of small unions that mounted lively protests in front of his office, and even at his residence, demanding that he raise the municipality's minimum wage (Interviews with Tangerang union

[11] One leader estimated that the 27 January action might have reached 200,000 workers because unions had cleared out most factories in the industrial estates (Interviews with Bekasi union leader, June 2012).

leaders, May 2012).[12] Wahidin issued a new minimum wage recommendation that matched Jakarta's minimum wage, which both set off protests in neighboring Tangerang district calling for the district head to follow suit, and redirected the swarm of protestors to his rival's provincial headquarters in Serang.

The ball was now in the governor's court, but the unions on the wage council were in an awkward position. They had signed a political contract with the governor, Ratu Atut Chosiyah, in May 2011 in which she had pledged to side with unions during wage negotiations. By approving the wage recommendation that the unions on the wage council had signed, she had kept her pledge. But by this time, the unions on the wage council could no longer control their members, who had joined the protestors from the alliance of small unions in the streets (Interviews with Tangerang union leaders, May 2012). The protests began in the third week of December and peaked on 29 December when tens of thousands of workers made their way to the governor's office by motorbike, completely shutting down the toll road to Jakarta. The governor broadcasted her decision to raise the minimum wage a second time to match Jakarta's over a loudspeaker at the rally so that the protesting workers had no doubt that she had made the commitment. Several days later, workers in other industrial areas in Banten province began to demand a second increase as well, and on 17 January the governor signed off on a second round of substantial increases in Cilegon municipality and Serang district (*Suara Merdeka,* 5 January 2012; *Kabar Banten*, 19 January 2012).[13]

These episodes of contentious politics in the 2011–12 wage cycle illustrate two dynamics amplified in subsequent years. First, union mobilizations intensified pressure on incumbents facing re-election, who often responded by approving large real wage increases. In other words, unions began to exploit the political opportunity opened by direct executive elections. Second – and this dynamic interacted with the first – unions cleverly harnessed interjurisdictional wage coordination in metropolitan areas to their advantage, and the result was quite large wage increases in the Surabaya and Jakarta metropolitan areas. As can be seen in Figures 4.2 and 4.3, minimum wages in the two metropolitan areas tracked each other very closely. In East Java, governors had a history of carefully coordinating Ring 1 wages, with Surabaya on top and the other four localities following closely behind. In Greater Jakarta, the localities are split across three different provincial governments and coordination

[12] The representatives from the large unions that sat on the municipal wage council were reluctant to ask the mayor for a bigger raise because the wage council had not yet reached an agreement on sectoral minimum wages, which they had striven to win over the previous two years (Interviews with Tangerang union leaders, May 2012). Since sectoral minimum wages typically exceed the minimum wage, a bigger increase in the baseline minimum wage would make it more difficult to persuade employers to agree to sectoral minimum wages (*Radar Banten*, 16 November 2011; *Radar Banten*, 18 November 2011).

[13] As in Bekasi, Apindo filed suit to challenge the governor's decision and unions responded with more protests (*Kompas*, 19 January 2012; *Detik*, 26 January 2012).

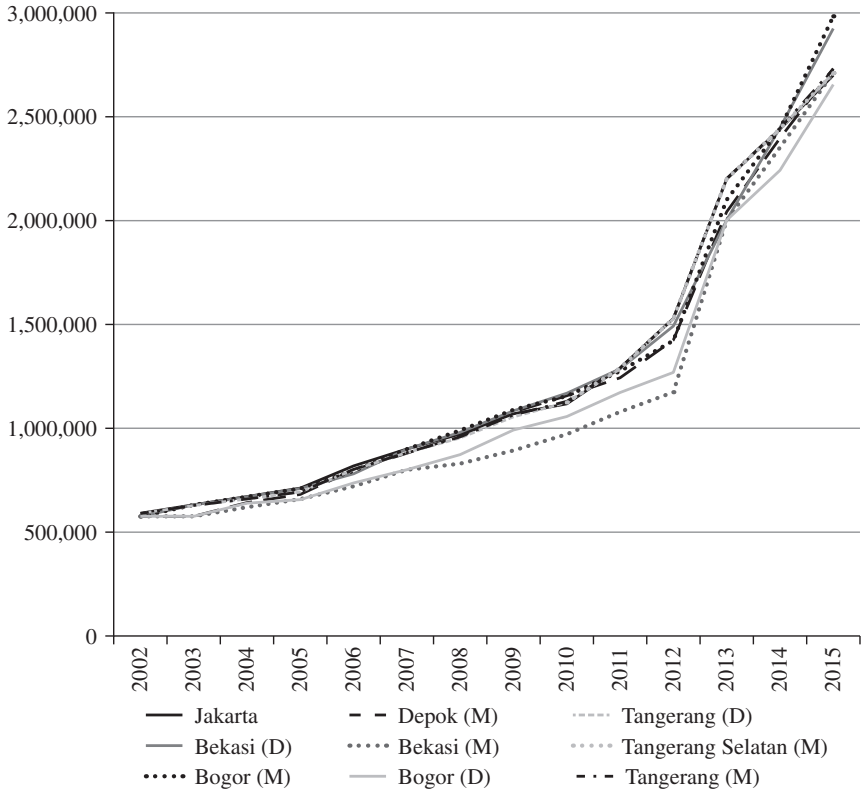

FIGURE 4.2. Nominal minimum wages (Rupiah) in Greater Jakarta, 2002–15. *Source:* Minimum wage data collected by authors.

was looser. Jakarta nevertheless served as a barometer in the region, and wage increases there strongly influenced wage-setting in neighboring localities. This history of wage coordination meant that if unions in one locality won a large increase, union mobilization could create a cascade effect that spilled into other jurisdictions.

In sum, increased contentiousness altered the calculus of incumbent executives, who in turn changed the balance of power on the wage councils by siding with unions. Worker mobilization around minimum wages not only allowed unions to take advantage of the electoral vulnerability of incumbents but also helped them to leverage patterns of wage coordination in the metropolitan areas. Employer resistance to larger raises prompted a strong backlash from workers, and the disruptive effects of these mobilizations in major industrial areas captured the attention of the central government, which intervened in both Bekasi and Tangerang to endorse labor's gains at the negotiating table. The central government sought to avoid similar tumult in the following year's wage cycle by signaling its support for more generous increases. Combined with a favorable

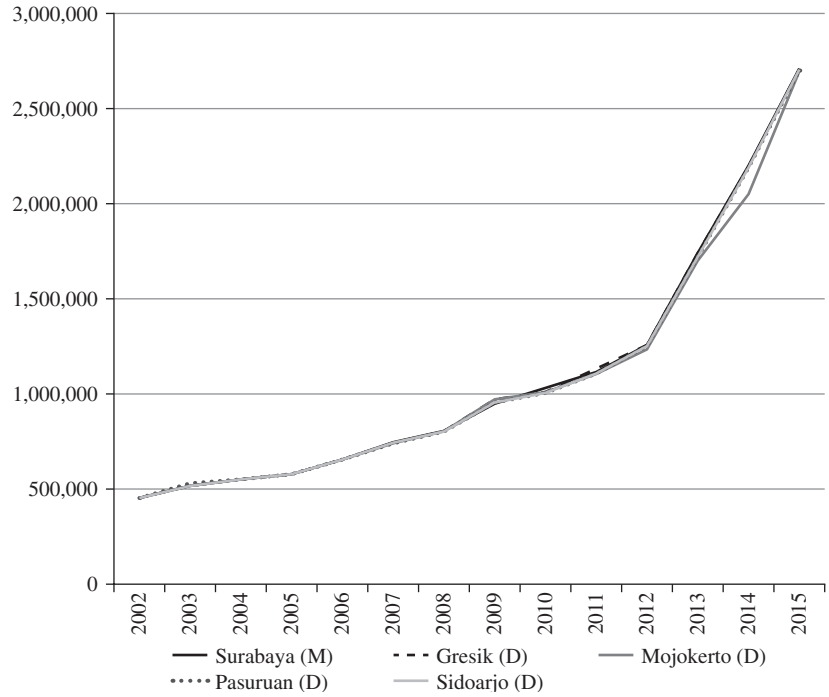

FIGURE 4.3. Nominal minimum wages (Rupiah) in Ring 1, 2002–15. *Source:* Minimum wage data collected by authors.

electoral calendar and stronger cooperation among unions at the national level, the result was unprecedented wage increases that extended beyond the two core metropolitan areas and other industrial localities to the rest of Indonesia.

Nationalizing Local Conflicts

Labor strife was on the radar of national leaders, not only because of the tumultuous protests around wages but also as a result of a bitter three-month strike at Freeport's huge copper and gold mine in West Papua, which was a major source of foreign exchange and revenue.[14] In the months after these episodes of labor strife, the national government took a series of steps to placate workers and create industrial peace (*Kompas,* 1 February 2012; *Antara*, 1 February 2012). The articulation of the government's new orientation began at the top, with a pronouncement about wages by President Yudhoyono in January 2012. Workers, he said, must receive adequate wages, and they should

[14] Output at the mine plummeted during the strike, and confrontations between striking workers and the security apparatus led to several deaths (*Voice of America*, 13 December 2011; *Agence France Press,* 25 December 2011).

improve over time. He urged local governments to set up strong procedures to prevent local wage conflicts from erupting and becoming national issues that required the central authorities to intervene (*Kompas,* 1 February 2012; *Antara*, 1 February 2012). Ministers echoed these points, expressing concern about the prevalence of wages below the decent living standard in many parts of the country and the chaotic and protracted wage-setting process of the previous year (see, e.g., *MetroTV News*, 27 January 2012). Complaints by employers that both local and central governments had left them to face swarms of protestors unaided went unheeded as the government took steps to avoid further unrest. On 3 February, Hatta Rajasa, the Coordinating Minister for the Economy, held a closed meeting with governors (*Kompas*, 3 February 2012). Soon after this meeting, the Minister of Manpower set a high bar for future negotiations when he announced that minimum wages throughout Indonesia should reach at least Rp 2 million per month by 2014 (*MetroTV News,* 11 February 2012). Because the highest minimum wage at the time was just over Rp 1.5 million, wage increases would have to be at least 33 percent over the next two years to reach this target.

The minister had the power to take steps that could help make the Rp 2 million figure a reality. In November 2011 he had already announced plans to revise the ministerial regulation that outlined the process for determining the decent living standard. According to him, the prevailing 2005 regulation was out of date and updating it would help to avoid worker protests (*Media Indonesia*, 22 November 2011). After opening KSPSI's third congress at the end of 2012, the minister announced plans to begin discussions with the National Tripartite Commission (*Lembaga Kerjasama Tripartit Nasional, LKS Tripnas*) and the National Wage Council (*Dewan Pengupahan Nasional*, Depenas), and hoped to have a new regulation finalized by the end of 2013 (*Media Indonesia,* 30 January 2012). In early June, a high-ranking official from the ministry announced that the committee had agreed to add four new items to the existing set of forty-six and to update eight others. He refused to give a precise figure for the impact of these changes, but when pressed he acknowledged that they would be "quite large" (*Kontan*, 8 June 2012).

As these negotiations were unfolding, the three major national confederations – KSPSI, KSPI, and KSBSI – began to coordinate their efforts in the lead-up to the establishment of MPBI (*Majelis Pekerja Buruh Indonesia*, Indonesian Assembly of Workers). Sensing the momentum following the passage of the social security law and the huge wage mobilizations of the previous year, they announced their opposition to the Yudhoyono government's plans to increase fuel prices by 33 percent and threatened to take action to derail them. The unions delivered on their threat, mobilizing thousands of workers around the nation on 21 March 2012 and lobbying local executive heads and other local government officials to oppose the cuts (*Jakarta Post,* 22 March 2012; *Jakarta Post,* 27 March 2012). In a fractious meeting, legislators voted to delay the fuel price increase (*Kompas,* 31 March 2012). A month later, at a boisterous May Day

rally in Bung Karno Stadium in Jakarta, the three confederations announced the formation of MPBI and formulated a set of shared objectives (*Tribun News*, 1 May 2012; *Jakarta Post*, 2 May 2012). Two months later, MPBI launched its signature Eradicate Outsourcing and Reject Low Wages (*Hapus Outsourcing dan Tolak Upah Murah, HOSTUM*) campaign (KSPI 2012).

MPBI soon began to weigh in on negotiations at the ministry. According to MPBI, the proposed decent living standard was insufficient because too few items were included and because it was based on the needs of a single person, not a family. KSPI president, Said Iqbal, complained that these changes would only increase the decent living standard by Rp 20,000–25,000, far below what MPBI deemed necessary (*Kontan*, 8 June 2012). He demanded that the discussions be moved from the national wage council, which had crafted the proposal, to the national tripartite forum, a body on which he sat. Unions sought a total basket of goods of 86 to 122 items and threatened massive protests if their demands were unmet (*Kontan*, 27 June 2012; *Jakarta Globe,* 2 July 2012). Just a week before the new regulation was issued on 10 July 2012, newspapers reported that the national wage council was still proposing to add just four new items, but when the ministry released the regulation on 10 July (Per/MEN/13/2012), the number of new items had increased to fourteen. Surprised at this sudden turn of events, one employer representative grumbled, "On what basis did the government get 14 components?" (*Kontan*, 11 July 2012). Also dissatisfied, unions greeted the new regulation with a large protest in Jakarta.[15] The Minister of Manpower explained to the protestors that the changes made in the regulation would add about Rp 48,000 to the standard, while increasing it to 86 items, as demanded by unions, would raise it by Rp 200,000, which would be too much to do in one full swoop (*Kompas,* 12 July 2012).[16]

MPBI created a new dynamic in minimum wage-setting by enhancing inter-jurisdictional collaboration across federation and confederation lines. Before it was established, unions at the local level commonly cooperated in minimum wage negotiations, but cooperation was less institutionalized across jurisdictions and was carried out primarily through the federations. Since federations and even confederations had stronger bases in some geographic areas than others, collaboration across confederation lines gave the labor movement a much broader reach. This coordination helped the labor movement to more effectively link local and national struggles, and not just with wages but also on outsourcing, another key element of the HOSTUM campaign.

At the local level, emboldened by their successful mobilizations in the 2011–12 round of minimum wage negotiations, elements within MPBI began to fight outsourcing through factory raids (*grebek pabrik*). Their goal was to

[15] An excellent video of the protest is available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=IsW3WawuFjw.
[16] KSPI provided a similar estimate (*UCA News*, 13 July 2012).

force companies to comply with a national law that restricted outsourcing to non-core work and to thereby transform contingent work in labor supply companies into permanent jobs for which workers were employed by the end-user. Unions targeted companies known to be violating outsourcing regulations. If warnings to correct these practices went unheeded, workers seized control of the workplace, sometimes taking the management hostage, and occupied it until management agreed to make the outsourced workers permanent employees. Some raids lasted more than ten days. This practice had a snowball effect, with workers who had gained permanent status after previous *grebek pabrik* actions joining campaigns to eliminate outsourced work in other factories (Mufakhir 2014). While some reversals of outsourcing occurred in Batam and elsewhere, the bulk was achieved in the industrial heartland of West Java, and primarily in Bekasi, where employers estimated that operations of more than 100 companies were affected by these actions (*Kompas*, 17 October 2012). According to a KSPI spokesperson, more than 40,000 outsourced workers gained direct, permanent employee status between June and November 2012 (Febrianto 2012).

As with the mobilizations around wages, these factory raids intensified conflict with employers, leading to several attacks by gangster organizations on workers. Labor activists suspected that employers hired these organizations (Interviews with Bekasi union activists, June 2013).[17] To advance its agenda on wages and outsourcing, MPBI flexed its muscles when it called a national strike for 3 October. The national strike was a huge success, with tens of thousands of workers participating in industrial areas across the country (*Jakarta Globe*, 4 October 2012; *The Wall Street Journal*, 4 October 2012). Soon after the national strike, MPBI succeeded in securing a further tightening of regulations on outsourcing (Evani, Marhaenjati, and Primanita 2012, Otto and Sentana 2012). Negotiations at the national tripartite forum were tense, with Apindo rejecting attempts to limit outsourcing to certain categories of work (*Hukum Online*, 14 November 2012), but the Ministry ultimately gave in to worker demands, issuing a new regulation in mid-November that restricted outsourcing to five types of work.

On the wage front, the national strike was strategically timed to coincide with the start of minimum wage negotiations. Days before the national strike, MPBI issued ambitious minimum wage targets for twenty-one major industrial areas (MPBI 2012).[18] The massive turnout for the strike put unions in a strong position for that year's negotiation. The national government also continued to signal support for large wage increases as the price for labor peace. Several weeks after the national strike, the Minister of Manpower held a meeting with the three governors of the provinces in the Jakarta metropolitan area,

[17] Also see Cahyono (2014).
[18] All but three (Batam, Medan, and Deli Serdang) were in Java (MPBI 2012).

stressing the need for them to synchronize wage-setting to avoid another year of chaos (*Tribun News*, 3 November 2012). A week later, just as wage councils across the nation were in the final stages of negotiations, the minister made a startling statement condoning minimum wages as high as 150 percent of the decent living standard (*Hukum Online*, 8 November 2012). This statement gave the union representatives on the wage councils ammunition to demand minimum wage increases far in excess of inflation levels.

The Perfect Storm: Gubernatorial Elections and Inter-jurisdictional Dynamics

This national commitment to raising the living standards of workers coincided with a favorable political opportunity structure at the local level to generate a wave of massive wage increases in industrial and metropolitan areas around Indonesia. Direct elections had given unions a new lever to exert pressure on executive candidates, in particular, incumbents running for re-election, to side with them in wage negotiations. The 2012–13 wage cycle was especially propitious because incumbent governors in East Java, Central Java, and West Java – provinces containing many of Indonesia's important industrial localities – were running for re-election, as were a number of local executives in industrial and metropolitan areas. Governors had much stronger incentives to sign off on large wage recommendations when they faced a re-election bid. While they were wary of driving away investment and unleashing protests by workers in other jurisdictions, it was also risky for them to reject generous recommendations made by mayors and district heads when facing re-election. Local executives in industrial areas up for re-election were also keen to take advantage of a governor's electoral vulnerability to submit large wage recommendations. In previous work, we demonstrated empirically that wage increases in the most industrialized localities where an incumbent governor faced re-election were about 13 percent higher than in industrialized areas without an incumbent running. When an incumbent local executive and a governor both faced re-election, wage increases in those localities averaged between 3.75 and 20.95 percent higher, with the most industrialized areas receiving the highest increases (Caraway, Ford, and Nguyen 2019). Thus, the wave of gubernatorial elections offered a golden opportunity, one the unions grasped. Unions in metropolitan areas drove up wage rises in neighboring regions by harnessing a large increase in one locality to create cascade effects in others. These dynamics were evident in both the Greater Jakarta and Greater Surabaya areas, with MPBI playing a central role in using big gains in one area to ratchet up increases in others.

In West Java, for example, Bekasi's mayor was up for re-election in December 2012. To curry favor with unions, he pledged to match the minimum wage of the neighboring Bekasi district, which has the strongest unions in Greater Jakarta (*Liputan6,* 3 October 2012). After Bekasi district's wage

council concluded its negotiations, the mayor approved a slightly higher minimum wage (*Tempo*, 16 November 2012). Unions in nearby Bogor district, where minimum wages were substantially lower than surrounding districts, sought to leverage elections and inter-jurisdictional dynamics by mounting huge protests to force the district head to agree to set the minimum wage equal to that awarded in Bekasi district. Unions in Bogor municipality, in turn, demanded a minimum wage equal to that in Bogor district (*Antara*, 29 October 2012; *Okezone*, 20 November 2012; *Pos Kota*, 30 October 2012). Bogor's district head was up for re-election in September 2013, and the vice-mayor of Bogor was planning to run in the mayoral race in September 2013. Both governments issued minimum wage recommendations identical to those in Bekasi district, increases of 58 and 70 percent, respectively (*Kontan*, 19 November 2012). West Java's governor, who was running for re-election in February, approved the massive wage increases (*Sindo News,* 22 November 2012).

In Jakarta, where leaders of KSPI and KSPSI had backed Joko Widodo in that year's gubernatorial race (*Okenews*, 4 August 2012), the government and unions voted together in support of a minimum wage recommendation of Rp 2.2 million, an increase of more than 45 percent (*Antara*, 15 November 2012). This large raise prevented the capital from falling behind the industrial districts in West Java.[19] Given the previous year's disruptions following Jakarta's higher than anticipated increase, the Banten localities delayed issuing their recommendations until after Jakarta had concluded its negotiations. Once Jakarta's work was done, they issued recommendations equal to or slightly above Jakarta's minimum wage (*Kompas,* 21 November 2012; *Antara*, 29 November 2012).

As unions had improved their coordination across jurisdictions, they began to take advantage of large increases in Greater Jakarta to drive wages up elsewhere. When Jakarta's wage council released its jaw-dropping 45 percent increase, the recommendations from Surabaya's Ring 1 districts were sitting on the governor's desk, awaiting his approval.[20] In view of the massive increase in Jakarta, MPBI urged East Java's unions to push the governor to narrow

[19] One high-level union source said Jakarta would have set the minimum wage at Rp 2.3 million if Bekasi district had held out for a higher figure. National union leaders were stating publicly that Bekasi would recommend Rp 2.2 million, and that Jakarta had to be higher (*Tempo*, 14 November 2012).

[20] Much of the maneuvering in Ring 1 had focused on Surabaya because the governor insisted that it must have the highest wage (*Tribun Surabaya*, 17 October 2012). Doubtful that Surabaya's mayor would issue a large increase, they targeted Pasuruan district, where the incumbent was running for re-election in March (*Okezone*, 3 October 2012). The district head sent a recommendation of Rp 1.552 million to the governor, which was higher than the Surabaya wage council's recommendation sitting on the mayor's desk. Surabaya's mayor then raised the council's recommendation over the objections of employers and sent the governor a recommendation of Rp 1.567 million (*Kompas*, 25 October 2012).

the wage gap between the two metropolitan areas. Unions leaped into action, mounting large and sustained protests outside the governor's office (*Detik*, 24 October 2012; *Tempo*, 16 November 2012). The sudden disruption of what had seemed to be an orderly minimum-wage-setting process shocked the East Java governor, who was also running for re-election but reluctant to accede to these demands because they far exceeded the decent living standard. But, after consulting with the Minister of Manpower, he announced updated wage figures which, although not as high as in Greater Jakarta, represented increases of more than 35 percent (*Detik*, 22 November 2012; *Surabaya Kita*, 24 November 2012; *Surabaya Pagi*, 20 November 2012).[21]

MPBI also played a role in wage negotiations outside Java as well. Minimum wages had been above the decent living standard in most years since 2007 in Medan, Indonesia's third-largest city, but it had lost ground because increases were smaller there than in Jakarta and Surabaya. In 2006, Medan's minimum wage was 92 percent of Jakarta's minimum wage but by 2012, it had fallen to just 84 percent. MPBI announced that this disparity could no longer be tolerated (Demo Buruh Blog 2012). Unions greeted the mayor's release of a figure far lower than unions wanted with a series of protests, including a rowdy one that shut down the road to the airport (*Analisa,* 14 November 2012; *Okezone*, 6 December 2012). After "marathon demonstrations," the mayor agreed to raise the minimum wage to Rp 1.65 million (*Okezone*, 18 December 2012). Although this was far below their demands, and Medan had fallen further behind Jakarta because of the huge increases in the capital, the new minimum wage, representing an increase of more than double what they usually received, was nevertheless much higher than the initial proposal.

Through contentious politics, skillful exploitation of the electoral vulnerability of incumbents, and harnessing inter-jurisdictional dynamics in their favor, unions had decisively reversed almost a decade of wage restraint. With a supportive central government and the fortunate timing of the gubernatorial elections in the 2012–13 wage cycle, minimum wages rose dramatically, especially in industrial districts and municipalities and in the two metropolitan areas. But the huge increases in the minimum wages in the 2012–13 cycle led inevitably to moves by the national government to reassert wage discipline. In an effort to prevent a repeat of the previous year, President Yudhoyono

[21] As unions pushed wages over the decent living standard, they began to make the case that it be treated as a floor. In Gresik, for example, negotiations had deadlocked because surveys found that the previous year's minimum wage exceeded decent living standard (*Antara*, 17 October 2012). Employers wanted the decent living standard to be a ceiling, but the governor had stated that the decent living standard was a floor, so unions demanded and won wage recommendations that exceeded the decent living standard (*Kompas*, 14 November 2012; *Detik,* 22 November 2012).

issued Presidential Order No. 9/2013 on Minimum Wage-Setting Policy in late September 2013. This presidential order instructed local governments to keep productivity and economic growth in mind when setting minimum wages and further encouraged a shift to bipartite workplace negotiations in districts where the minimum wage exceeded the decent living standard. In localities where the minimum wage fell below the decent living standard, it endorsed movement toward the standard, albeit at a slower pace for labor-intensive industries.

As support by the national government for generous wage increases evaporated, cooperation among unions also declined when MPBI collapsed after a series of disagreements between the confederations' leaders about its policy platform and tactics (Interview with KSPI president, February 2014; Interview with KSBSI president, February 2015; Interview with KSPSI president, June 2015).[22] In September 2013, a new union alliance called the Consolidated National Labor Movement (*Konsolidasi Nasional Gerakan Buruh*, KNGB), led by KSPI, was formed to campaign for a 50 percent minimum wage increase, an end to outsourcing, and for healthcare for all Indonesians (TURC n.d.). However, the new alliance did not pack MPBI's punch. The national strike they called on 31 October 2013 had a much lower turn out than that of the previous year (Fadjarudin 2013), and they aborted plans for a series of regional strikes in late November just days before they were to take place (FSPMI 2013a). Thus, while unions quickly voiced their opposition to the president's efforts to restrain wages, they were in a weaker position to coordinate resistance to it (*Liputan6*, 8 October 2013; *Tribun Jakarta*, 17 October 2013). In order to continue to win substantial minimum wage increases, then, unions would have to fall back on the strength of their local coalitions.

RESILIENT REGIONAL NETWORKS AND INTER-JURISDICTIONAL MANEUVERING

The prospects for unions to maintain momentum on minimum wages seemed grim. Not only were political conditions less favorable nationally for continued success on the wage front, the political opportunity structure at the local level was also more challenging. No incumbents were running for re-election in the two metropolitan areas in late 2013, 2014, or in early 2015. Despite these unpropitious conditions, wage increases, although not as large as the previous year, still averaged 16–17 percent on Java – roughly 10 percent

[22] KSPI demanded a 50 percent increase in the minimum wage, but the other confederations feared that another round of large increases might lead to massive layoffs. The situation was complicated by politics at the international level, where some leaders within KSBSI and KSPSI felt KSPI president Said Iqbal took the credit for joint efforts (Field observations and interviews with union officials, various years).

higher than the inflation rate – in 2014 and 2015. Wage councils in industrial areas continued to set minimum wages above the decent living standard and increases rose considerably in non-industrial and non-urban localities that had previously received more modest increases. Although the president refused to revoke the presidential order, in the end, governors did not fully implement it.

The president's order was not binding, so unions had the opportunity to mobilize at the local level to prevent its implementation. By drawing on the strength of their local coalitions, unions in some parts of Indonesia were successful in this endeavor. Most notable in this regard was the Ring 1 area around Surabaya, where minimum wages still trailed far behind those of Jakarta.[23] This gap provided greater space for large increases there, and in order to help close this gap, unions had persuaded the governor to issue a letter instructing wage councils to raise the quality of three items used to calculate the decent living standard (Interview with union leaders in Surabaya and Gresik, March 2016 and February 2014). This seemingly small change in the rules substantially increased the decent living standard and thereby set a higher baseline for negotiations in the 2013–14 and 2014–15 wage cycles, which set the stage for increases averaging well over 20 percent in both years.[24]

Meanwhile, in the Greater Jakarta area, some governors were more determined to limit wage increases. Most important was Jakarta's governor, who sent strong signals early in the negotiations that wage increases would be modest (*JPNN*, 19 October 2013). The vice governor observed that unions' demands for 50 percent increases were "too lavish," and that an increase of about 5 percent would be reasonable. Governor Jokowi approved an 11 percent raise. Since Jakarta's minimum wage was approved before any other industrial area, this decision put downward pressure on wages elsewhere. While the nominal figures in West Java closely followed Jakarta, the percentage increases were higher, ranging from a low of 12 percent in Bogor district to a high of 22 percent in Bekasi district. In Banten province, Tangerang's wages had for many years been tightly tied to Jakarta. But once Jokowi released the smaller-than-hoped-for figure, unions advocated breaking with tradition. Despite raucous protests, local executives again approved increases that closely tracked Jakarta (*Harian Tangerang,* 12 November 2013; *Harian Tangerang*, 14 November 2013; *Sindo News,* 18 November 2013). Tangerang's wage restraint, in turn, had a dampening impact on wage increases in other industrial areas in Banten. Wage restraint in Jakarta also had repercussions in Batam, where some of the union members on the

[23] In 2013, Surabaya's minimum wage was just 79 percent of Jakarta's.

[24] One union leader estimated that the improvements in quality added about Rp 500,000 to the decent living standard.

council were instructed by their national leaders to wait for Jakarta's wage council to conclude its negotiations (Interview with Batam union leader, October 2014). Unions had demanded 50 percent increases and mounted large protests to win them (*Tribun News*, 1 November 2013), but after Jakarta announced, the mayor approved the figure proposed by the government negotiators, which was 99 percent of Jakarta's minimum wage (*Haluan Kepri*, 13 November 2013).

Seeing that modest wage hikes in Jakarta contained wages in other major industrial areas, unions sought to hijack inter-jurisdictional dynamics to their benefit in the 2014–15 wage cycle. Their plan was to beat Jakarta to the punch by securing a large wage recommendation before Jakarta's wage council completed its deliberations. Jakarta, they calculated, would then be compelled to match the first mover to avoid falling behind. Unions targeted Pasuruan district in East Java's Ring 1 because FSPMI's branch and provincial leader, Jazuli, was related to the district head, who had been very responsive to unions in previous years.[25] Pasuruan's wage council finished their negotiations first and submitted a recommendation of Rp 2.7 million, a 23 percent increase, to the governor (*Kabarpas,* 3 November 2014). By 10 November, all Ring 1 localities except Surabaya had submitted their recommendations of around Rp 2.7 million (*Sindo News*, 11 November 2014). Surabaya's mayor was reluctant to issue her recommendation because Jakarta's minimum wage was not yet official, so she hedged her bets and sent the governor two figures and told him to decide (*Surabaya News*, 13 November 2014); *Sindo News*, 14 November 2014).

As East Java's governor awaited Jakarta's move, Jakarta's new governor, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama – typically referred to by his nickname, Ahok – argued for wage restraint, stating that a 10 percent increase would be appropriate. But the potential effect of a rise in fuel prices on the cost of living resulted in deadlocked negotiations, and unable to reach an agreement, the wage council submitted two figures to the governor (*Warta Kota,* 4 November 2014; *Tribun News*, 13 November 2014). Unions sought to further increase pressure on Ahok by winning a large increase in Bekasi, and were successful in persuading Bekasi's mayor to issue a wage recommendation of Rp 2.984 million, an increase of 22 percent.[26] KSPI president,

[25] At the regional level, there was also concern that Surabaya's mayor would be reluctant to submit a large figure, and unions followed the advice of a highly placed official in the provincial government to secure a high wage recommendation in one of the Ring 1 localities before Surabaya had completed its negotiations (Interview with union leader, June 2015).

[26] The figure the Bekasi district head submitted to the governor was quite a bit lower than the municipality. In response to pleas from union leaders in the regency, the governor revised the wage upward, narrowing the gap with Bekasi municipality (*Warta Kota,* 24 November 2014; *Urban Cikarang*, 27 December 2014).

Said Iqbal, tried to exploit this development to shame Ahok, arguing that as the nation's capital, it should have a higher wage than its neighbors (*MetroTV News,* 14 November 2014). However, Ahok did not take the bait and approved a wage equal to those submitted in Ring 1, which represented an 11 percent increase (*Sindo News,* 17 November 2014). After Jakarta's governor signed off on a final figure, East Java's governor made his decision with thousands of workers protesting outside his office, setting Surabaya's minimum wage a tiny fraction above Jakarta's (*Detik,* 20 November 2014; *Kompas*, 20 November 2014).

CONCLUSION

Between 2009 and 2014, Indonesia's labor movement developed a more creative and forward-looking set of tactics to complement and amplify the effects of their mobilizational power. They also shifted from a strategy that was primarily reactive to one in which they began to actively shape labor-related policies. KAJS played a pivotal role in securing the passage of the Social Security Provider's Act over the opposition of the popular Yudhoyono government, developing a sophisticated plan of attack that combined the development of draft legislation, assiduous lobbying, an aggressive legal strategy, and demonstrations. Although many unions did not support KAJS, its undeniable impact on the legislative process showed unions what they could accomplish. Their success in winning such significant legislation expanded the horizons of the labor movement and gave rise to more sustained action around minimum wages and outsourcing.

Unions adopted a different but equally creative approach to wages and outsourcing. Here, the arena was not the legislature, but the executive branch of government. Initially, these struggles were largely focused on the local and provincial levels, but the explosion of conflict with employers nationalized these issues by creating major disruptions in core industrial areas, resulting in a more accommodating posture from a national government eager to deter further unrest. With the formation of MPBI, unions linked their struggles in the local and national arenas, and unions learned to more effectively exploit electoral cycles and harness regional wage-setting dynamics to their advantage. They not only secured stronger regulations on outsourcing and the decent living standard, but also won large and sustained real wage increases. After MPBI's collapse, local union networks continued to deploy these new tactics and sustained respectable real wage increases despite the national government's desire for greater wage restraint and a far less propitious electoral calendar.

As this chapter has shown, unions often won larger wage increases by leveraging the electoral vulnerability of incumbent mayors, district heads, and governors. Unions' experiences in the minimum wage-setting process had

demonstrated that these elections could be leveraged to win concessions from politicians. Individual unions and networks of unions, therefore, increasingly sought to leverage local and provincial elections not only to win larger raises, but also to secure other kinds of policy commitments from both incumbents and challengers running for executive office. Unions began to test their mettle, and in doing so, they took the first step toward more active and direct engagement in electoral politics.

5

Local Executive Races

Indonesia's labor movement embarked on its unusual path of combining contentious politics in the street with autonomous electoral engagement in 2005 when direct executive elections were introduced at the provincial and local levels. With decentralization, local legislatures had gained the power to pass local legislation affecting workers. But it is mayors, district heads, and governors – with their role in minimum wage-setting, their capacity to make policy, and their ability to hire and fire the bureaucrats that staff the local manpower office – who hold the authority to make and implement policy decisions that could benefit their members. Savvy unionists knew as well as anyone that Indonesia's political system favors the rich, but workers were also a sizable constituency, giving them some bargaining power with candidates. It was these calculations that prompted unions in Indonesia's industrial centers to actively engage in the electoral process.

Importantly, many candidates in industrial areas were also interested in establishing alliances with unions. With the advent of direct elections, candidates running for executive office in industrial centers around the country began currying favor with labor leaders in the hope of securing the worker vote. Doing so could not guarantee a landslide victory. Even in highly industrial areas, manufacturing seldom comprises more than one-third of employment. What is more, not all manufacturing workers are employed in formal sector workplaces and not all formal sector workplaces are unionized. Unions, moreover, could not guarantee that members would follow their directions at the ballot box. The voting choices of even the most committed union members are influenced by family ties and factors like religion and ethnicity, not just by their status as workers. Yet, despite these obvious limitations, it was clear to candidates and their strategists that unions were a potentially valuable source of votes in a tight race.

In all our field sites, with the exception of Deli Serdang, unions entered into political contracts with an incumbent or challenger in multiple executive races.

In some cases, these political deals were similar to the broader patterns that scholars have identified in Indonesian elections, with unions trading their support for patronage benefits (Aspinall and Berenschot 2019). But, in most cases, unions focused on more programmatic demands, asking that candidates make a public commitment to implement labor-friendly policies. As we have seen in earlier chapters, the key driver for unions' engagement in the electoral sphere was their desire to secure government support for their demands in the minimum wage councils, but they also saw an opportunity to pursue long-term policy goals like pro-worker labor regulations or access to better public transport so that workers did not have to spend so much on commuting to work.

As with any election promise, these agreements did not guarantee that either side would keep its end of the bargain. Some unions made a sincere effort to mobilize the worker vote. Others did not even try. In a substantial number of cases, however, unionists not only publicly stated their support for a particular candidate but also arranged for them to put their case to workers, used their authority to urge members to support them, and even served on their campaign teams (*tim sukses*). Similarly, only some candidates delivered on their promises once elected. Even where candidates delivered, they always did so in a rapidly changing political context where labor was not their first priority. As a consequence, gains achieved though these efforts were largely ephemeral. In Deli Serdang and Bekasi, the desire to have a greater influence prompted unions to take the riskier path of running their own candidate for executive office – a task that proved daunting even for the strongest union candidates.

This chapter begins with a discussion of the risks and rewards associated with unions' different approaches to executive contests. It then analyzes the evolution of different union alliances with executive candidates in our field sites, with a focus on the nature of the political contracts reached (patronage or programmatic), the extent to which unions and candidates acted upon them, and the consequences – where there were any – of a failure to do so. As this discussion demonstrates, the mechanism of the political contract, while imperfect, delivered programmatic benefits for workers, especially in relation to the minimum wage. And, although some candidates remained unpunished for ignoring their commitments to the unions, others were subjected to mass demonstrations or boycotts in subsequent elections. Finally, this chapter turns its attention to attempts to secure the executive office for union candidates in Deli Serdang and Bekasi. While both attempts failed, a comparison of them reveals the differences that union density, political experience, and effective planning can make to a union candidate's electability in these winner-takes-all races.

RISKS AND REWARDS

Unions can choose one of a number of strategies in relation to executive elections (Table 5.1). They can maintain a policy of non-engagement, either because they believe that unions have no place in the murky world of electoral

TABLE 5.1. *Risks and rewards of engagement in executive races*

	Potential Rewards	Potential Risks or Trade-Offs
No engagement	• Does not divert resources from other work • Not tied to a specific candidate, so no impact if unsuccessful • No risk of splitting the membership • No false hopes raised	• Absence of organizational policy on political engagement means that individual union leaders may openly support different candidates • Lost opportunity to build political awareness among members • Lost opportunity to influence policy • Lost opportunity to capitalize on wage campaigns
Passive support	• Does not divert resources from other work • Less chance of union leaders supporting different candidates • Opportunity to broaden the role of regional alliances • May provide some opportunities to influence policy during the election campaign	• Lost opportunity to capitalize on wage campaigns • Lost opportunity to build political awareness among members • Internal divisions in the union • Little chance of ongoing policy influence if supported candidate wins • Possibility of adverse reaction if another candidate wins
Political contract	• Opportunity to capitalize on wage campaigns • Opportunity to build political awareness among members • Opportunity to broaden the role of regional alliances • Patronage benefits and/or potential policy influence • Formal agreement (written or unwritten) means that the union(s) can hold candidate to account publicly	• Risk of capture • Diverts resources from other work • Internal divisions in the union or union alliance • Candidate disenchantment if can't deliver votes • Member disenchantment if supported candidate is successful but does not deliver (or deliver enough)
Field union candidate	• Opportunity to build political awareness and experience among members • Opportunity to broaden the role of regional alliances • Opportunity (if successful) to change the political landscape locally but also set a precedent for other localities	• High-risk strategy as winner takes all • Diverts many more resources from other work • Some union leaders may have ties to political parties, making it awkward for them to support the candidate • Other unions may not support candidate, in some cases weakening existing collaboration between unions • Member disappointment if campaign hard for a losing candidate

politics or because they are fearful of the consequences of diverting resources from what they see as their "core" work. Alternatively, they can adopt a strategy of passive support, where union leaders make a public statement – generally in favor of an incumbent or a favorite – but do not engage directly in any meaningful way with the candidate. They can also choose to (try to) reach an agreement – in some cases verbal, in other cases written – in which the candidate commits to certain deliverables in exchange for union backing. A fourth and final possibility is to run a union candidate for office, as occurred in Deli Serdang and Bekasi.

Each of these different strategies has potential risks and rewards. A decision not to engage may protect a union from controversy, but it fritters away the potential for policy leverage and carries the risk that individual leaders may use the union's name to support different candidates. Passive support for a promising candidate can reduce the likelihood of different officials backing different candidates, but it squanders the union's political capital. In addition, neither of these options makes use of an important opportunity to build political awareness among members. By contrast, the third and fourth strategies offer a real chance to exert policy influence and develop members' sense of identity as workers, though each carries its own set of potential risks. Entering into a well-structured political contract provides a mechanism through which unions can hold candidates to account – especially if they back a first-term incumbent or a challenger who wins – and can produce concrete outcomes.[1] But this strategy also carries risks of capture, internal divisions, and member alienation, not to mention the very real risk of candidate disenchantment if the union fails to deliver votes. Fielding a union candidate offers the greatest potential gains but also by far the highest risks given its resource implications and its potential to disrupt existing collaboration between unions. What is more, the likelihood of success is minuscule by virtue of the size and heterogeneity of the electorate; it is also the most difficult path to take in the face of unrealistic registration requirements, the cost of mounting a campaign of this size, and the winner-takes-all nature of executive races. More often, then, leaders from one or more unions decide to identify a candidate with at least some chance of winning and offer to back them in exchange for a commitment to provide either some patronage or programmatic benefit.

[1] Both incumbents running for re-election and first-time contenders can potentially gain from securing support from a union. From the union perspective, however, the calculus of risk and reward is quite different. Incumbents often seek to make deals during a re-election bid but are unlikely to be greatly concerned about the consequences of failing to deliver on their promises once re-elected. They may, however, deliver significant benefits if a minimum wage negotiation cycle falls in the period of a campaign. The risk is higher with a first-time contender, in the sense that their chances of winning are generally lower, but the payoff is also potentially higher because they have more chance not only of building a long-term relationship but also of holding the candidate to account.

ENTERING INTO POLITICAL CONTRACTS

From 2005, unions in Batam, Tangerang, Gresik, and Bekasi have worked to leverage local contests to secure commitments from different candidates to channel more resources to unions and to support pro-labor policies. In the absence of a programmatic labor party, unions were largely pragmatic in the sense that they would deal with any candidate willing to offer them something in return for their support. Yet while many of the deals included some form of patronage, there was also a clear commitment on the part of an increasing number of unions to leverage these opportunities for programmatic gains. As the case studies given below show, these efforts tended to be most successful in locations where unionists worked together across organizational lines.[2]

Batam

One of the very first direct executive elections took place in the newly minted Riau Islands Province in June 2005.[3] In the years that followed, two unions entered into repeated political contracts in both municipal and provincial races (Table 5.2).[4] KSPSI's contracts were patronage-based, but FSPMI focused heavily on programmatic demands that related not just to wages but also to the improvement of industrial relations processes and broader issues like affordable transport. KSPSI's experience illustrates the challenges of accountability: it secured a building from the incoming governor in 2005, but when the incoming mayor failed to deliver in 2011, the absence of any public undertaking meant that it could do little to demand accountability. By contrast, FSPMI's very public approach to comparing the labor policies of different candidates put labor issues firmly on the agenda and successive candidates it supported delivered on some, if not all, of their promises. But its high level of political engagement came at a cost: the inability to agree on a single candidate in the 2011 mayoral election split the branch.

The worker vote was extremely attractive to candidates in 2005 when the first gubernatorial election was held. At that time, 77 percent of the workforce in Batam – the province's most populous city – was employed by one of its 738 manufacturing plants (BPS Kota Batam 2006). KSPSI, the largest union, did a deal with Ismeth Abdullah, the former head of the Batam Industrial Development Authority, who had been appointed as the interim governor the previous year. In return for its support, KSPSI was promised a building in which to house its secretariat (Interview with KSPSI Batam branch secretary,

[2] The discussions of the Batam and Tangerang cases draw in part on Ford (2014) and Caraway and Ford (2014).

[3] The 2002 decree on the formation of the new province came into effect in 2004. For background on the formation of the Riau Islands Province and the Batam Free Trade Zone, see Ford (2003b).

[4] A number of other unions provided passive support to one or other of the candidates.

TABLE 5.2. *Union contracts with candidates in executive races in Batam municipality*

Election	Team	Key Parties	Union(s) Involved	Nature of Contract	Key Elements of Contract		Outcomes	
					Patronage	Programmatic	Unions	Candidates
Governor (2005)	Ismeth Abdullah Muhammad Sani (incumbent, won)	Golkar PKS	KSPSI + affiliated federations	Oral	• Secretariat		• Encouraged members to vote for team	• Gave KSPSI a building
Mayor (2006)	Ahmad Dahlan Ria Saptarika (won)	Golkar PKS	FSPMI KSPSI	Written (FSPMI)	• Secretariat	• Union input into policy • Enforce labor law • Improve Manpower Office performance • Develop training opportunities • Affordable transport, housing, education, healthcare	• Public candidate debate on labor issues • Polled members re team to support • Contract signed and made public • Used factory-level structures to mobilize support	• Involved unions in policy discussions • Pro-worker labor regulation (foundered in legislature)
Governor (2010)	Muhammad Sani Soerya Respationo (won)	PDIP Hanura	FSPMI	Written		• Union input into policy • Fulfilment of living wage standard • Enforce labor law • Improve Manpower Office performance • Develop training opportunities • Affordable transport, housing, education, healthcare	• Televised candidate debate on labor issues • Polled members re-team to support • Used factory-level structures to mobilize support	• Banners thanking FSPMI displayed • Asked to nominate technical expert • Access re wage-setting across province • Substantial increase on locally agreed figure for 2012 after Sani intervened

Election	Team	Key Parties	Union(s) Involved	Nature of Contract	Key Elements of Contract		Outcomes	
					Patronage	Programmatic	Unions	Candidates
Mayor (2011)	Amir Hakim Siregar Syamsul Bahrum (lost)	Hanura	FSPMI (split)	Oral		• Living wages • Better health insurance • Worker housing • Training center for workers	• Background checks and meetings with all five candidates • Union split and campaign unfocused	
	Ria Saptarika Zainal Abidin (had been deputy mayor, lost)	PKS Golkar	FSPMI (split)	Oral		• Living wages • Better health insurance • Worker housing • Training center for workers	• Background checks and meetings with all five candidates • Union split and campaign unfocused	
	Ahmad Dahlan Muhammad Rudi (incumbent, won)	Demokrat PKB PAN	KSPSI	Oral	• Vehicle		• Encouraged members to vote for candidate	• Did not deliver

April 2010). In addition to encouraging members to support Ismeth, activists in some of the confederation's affiliated federations, including its metalworkers' union, became actively involved in his campaign team (Interview with the FSP LEM Batam branch head, June 2013). Once in office, Ismeth delivered on his promise (Interview with KSPSI Batam branch head, June 2013).

FSPMI's Batam branch was slower off the mark. In the absence of an organizational strategy, different leaders within the branch supported different teams in 2005. As a result, none of the candidates took the union's perspective seriously (Interview with FSPMI provincial official, June 2007). This experience – along with union officials' participation in a public budget-monitoring program run by the Solidarity Center, which encouraged unionists to explore the links between welfare of the workers and broader policy domains such as transport and education – prompted discussions regarding the electoral potential of the labor vote in a region so dominated by industrial workers (Interviews with FSPMI Batam branch officials, July 2007). Politically attuned members of FSPMI went on to develop a more coherent strategy of engagement in anticipation of the mayoral election scheduled in January 2006.

Not wishing to openly defy the central leadership, they established the Metalworkers Network of Knots (Jaringan Simpul Pekerja Metal, Jas Metal), a structurally independent front organization that made it possible for members of FSPMI to engage in electoral politics without formally involving the union (Ford 2014). Unlike KSPSI, which relied on informal approaches to both candidates and to its members, Jas Metal aspired to influence the policy agenda.[5] Having invited all four teams to a series of public events and consulted with plant-level union leaders, Jas Metal signed a political contract in November 2005 with Ahmad Dahlan and Ria Saptarika. The contract documented the candidates' commitment to seek input from unions in the policy-making process; enforce the labor law and enhance the performance of the local manpower office; provide affordable transport, housing, education, and healthcare; and develop training opportunities for workers (Dahlan and Saptarika 2005). Having made the contents of its deal public, Jas Metal used the union's factory-level structures to mobilize grassroots support. Once in office, the winning team involved them in policy discussions, which enabled them to lobby for local policies that better served the interests of industrial workers, including a local labor regulation (Interviews with legislators and FSPMI Batam activists, June 2007).

Buoyed by this outcome, FSPMI followed a similar strategy in the Riau Islands' second gubernatorial election in 2010. One of the three teams to pass

[5] The focus on labor issues paid dividends for 2006 minimum wages, the negotiation of which took place in the campaign period. An increase of 28 percent was secured, which was by far the largest increase in our five field sites in that year. The governor, who had made a deal with KSPSI in the previous year, also approved large increases in other districts and municipalities in the province.

verification was led by Ismeth's former running mate, Muhammad Sani, who had paired up with Soerya Respationo, former Batam mayor Nyat Kadir's running mate in the gubernatorial race of 2005.[6] Three weeks out from election day, Jas Metal organized a televised debate between the teams on issues including the lack of enforcement of the labor law, outsourcing, workers' compensation, and the employment of foreign nationals, as well as current issues including a violent confrontation in Batam's shipyards between local workers and their expatriate manager.[7] Informed by member polling taken after the debate, Jas Metal went on to sign a formal political contract with Sani and Soerya – the terms of which closely resembled those agreed to by the mayoral candidate in 2006 (Interview with former Jas Metal head, June 2013). The victorious team recognized FSPMI's contribution to the win, commissioning banners thanking Jas Metal for its support to be displayed around the city. FSPMI was also asked to nominate a technical expert to serve on the governor's staff. Branch officials reported that they subsequently had access to the leadership on wage-setting not only in Batam – in the wage negotiations for 2012, Sani overrode the agreed figure of Rp 1,310,000 and upped the minimum wage to Rp 1,402,000 following worker demonstrations – but also in less unionized locations in the province (Interview with FSPMI Batam branch head, June 2013).

Impressed by the fact that Jas Metal members had been prepared to work on Sani's campaign without being paid, the provincial head of Hanura, Amir Hakim Siregar, began working more closely with FSPMI, providing financial support for strike actions and training for Garda Metal (Interview with Hanura provincial head, June 2013). Hanura does not take a strong stance nationally on labor issues. In Batam, however, the party was recognized as having an established labor platform (Interview with Golkar Batam branch official, June 2013). Hakim himself had long been involved with an NGO that provides reproductive health services to women workers in Batam's industrial parks (Interview with Hanura provincial head, June 2013). This relationship proved to be important when Hakim decided to run in the 2011 mayoral race. As in previous races, Jas Metal organized background checks and meetings with each of the five candidates (Interview with FSPMI Batam branch officials, April 2010 and June 2013). But the branch was divided in their assessments of the candidates, with those loyal to PKS leaning toward the outgoing deputy mayor, Ria Saptarika, and others leaning toward Hakim (Interview with SPEE official, June 2013). Unable to reach a consensus, the camps supported their own candidates, causing a level of friction that not only paralyzed the branch's capacity to act politically but also its broader effectiveness for

[6] Ismeth himself had been forced to withdraw just three months before election-day having been arrested on charges of corruption, his wife Aida Nasution running in his place. Some KSPSI affiliates supported Aida, but KSPSI itself did not back a candidate in the 2010 race (Interviews April 2010 and June 2013).

[7] For a discussion of the shipyard incident, see Ford (2013).

years to come. Importantly, though, both groups favored candidates who were considered to be pro-worker, and who were unlikely to win without labor's support. By contrast, KSPSI again backed an incumbent in a patronage-based deal. This time, however, received nothing in return.

The Batam case reveals an important strategic divide within the labor movement with regard to the purpose of political contracts. In both 2005 and 2011, KSPSI reached an agreement with an incumbent they knew was likely to win (Interview with KSPSI Batam branch head, June 2013). What is more, their primary objective was to secure classic patronage benefits. By contrast, FSPMI not only pursued a platform-oriented strategy, but increasingly took risks supporting underdog candidates it felt were committed to labor. It also reveals the limits of working alone: union density was extremely high in Batam during this period, and if unions had collaborated they would have exerted far more influence than could any single union. As we shall see in the Tangerang case, however, collaboration carries its own risks as well as benefits.

Tangerang

As in Batam, political power-brokers in the industrial center of Tangerang repeatedly sought the support of unions in local and provincial executive races. The stakes were, in fact, higher because labor issues had developed a particular salience in power struggles between the Tangerang mayor and the governor of Banten – most clearly evidenced in the wage negotiations for 2012. Banding together, an alliance of large unions leveraged this inter-elite competition to secure both patronage and programmatic benefits (Table 5.3). But, as the wage struggles of 2011–12 revealed, this success led to conflict with the members of a competing alliance of smaller unions, who felt that the large unions had sold workers out for personal gain, which ultimately undermined the capacity of the "inside" alliance to deliver on its promises to keep the industrial peace (Interviews with various unions, May 2012). Tangerang's unions also struggled internally with the competing partisan loyalties of union leaders, although these differences did not have as dire consequences there as in Batam.

Unions began to engage with executive candidates in both Tangerang district and Tangerang municipality in 2008. In Tangerang district, PKS challenger Jazuli Juwaini entered into a written political contract with a group of unions when running for Tangerang district head (Juliawan 2014, 26). In that contract, he promised to deliver a living wage and public service infrastructure in an integrated industrial zone, as well as better local transport and a local labor regulation. In return, unions prepared pamphlets, brochures, and stickers and encouraged their members to vote for him. In the same race, KSPSI supported the incumbent, Golkar's Ismet Iskandar, who won the election. This did not, however, bring any benefits for KSPSI. This was perhaps not surprising, since the union did little during the campaign period to support Ismet's candidacy. Reflecting on the election, KSPSI's general secretary, who

TABLE 5.3. *Union contracts with candidates in executive races in Tangerang district and municipality*

Election	Team	Key Parties	Union(s) Involved	Nature of Contract	Key Elements of Contract		Outcomes	
					Patronage	Programmatic	Unions	Candidates
Mayor (2008)	Wahidin Halim Arief Wismansyah (incumbent, won)	Golkar PDIP PAN PPP	SPN	Written	• Secretariat • Study trips for union leaders • Funded key union officials on minor hajj	• Improve workers' welfare • Ensure that wage levels were at least as high as Jakarta	• Encouraged members to vote for team	• Study trips for union leaders • Funded officials on minor hajj • Kept promise to match Jakarta's minimum wage
District Head (2008)	Jazuli Juwaini Airin Diany (lost)	PKS	Alliance of large unions	Written		• Living wage • Local labor regulation • Integrated industrial zone (accommodation, market, schools, clinic) • Better public transport	• Socialization with members (pamphlet, brochures, stickers)	
	Ismet Iskandar Rano Karno (incumbent, won)	Golkar	KSPSI	Oral		• General support for workers	• Did not deliver	• Did not deliver
Governor (2011)	Atut Chosiyah Rano Karno (incumbent, won)	Golkar PDIP	SPN FSPMI FSP TSK FSP KEP SBSI 1992 KSPSI (Y) KSPSI (S)	Oral	• Funding for May Day event • Funded key union officials on minor hajj • Provision of resources to company-level unions for training	• Support for living minimum wage and increases in sectoral wages • Direct district/city leaders to support pro-worker measures	• Prepared banners • Workplace meetings to talk about her programs	• Regularly attended worker events • Supported workers in minimum wage negotiations • Provided Rp 1.5 million each to company-level unions • Funded officials on minor hajj

(continued)

TABLE 5.3 *(continued)*

Election	Team	Key Parties	Union(s) Involved	Nature of Contract	Key Elements of Contract		Outcomes	
					Patronage	Programmatic	Unions	Candidates
Governor (2017)	Wahidin Halim Andika Hazrumy (won)	Demokrat Golkar Gerindra	Most large unions	Written		• Ignore Government Regulation No. 78/2015 • Improve Manpower Office performance • Local labor regulation • Crack-down on foreign workers • Better access to health-care for workers	• Member events • Involvement of some labor leaders in Wahidin's campaign team	• Complied with Government Regulation No. 78/2015 but implemented health and education measures as compensation

was based in Tangerang, observed: "There wasn't enough time. Politicians have long memories if you get into a political contract and it doesn't work out" (Interview, February 2014).

In Tangerang municipality, unions reached an agreement with Golkar incumbent, Wahidin Halim, when he ran for re-election in 2008. In return for the union's support, Wahidin promised to contribute to the improvement of workers' welfare, including by ensuring that wage levels would not be lower than those of Jakarta. Once in office, he kept his end of the bargain, not only matching wage increases in Jakarta but providing a number of patronage benefits (Interview with SPN Banten provincial head, May 2012; Interview with KSPSI Tangerang district branch head, February 2014). On the basis of his performance, Wahidin assumed that he would have the support of the unions when he decided to run in the 2011 gubernatorial elections for Banten (Interview with SPN Tangerang municipal branch head, May 2012). Initially, the seven unions represented in the provincial wage council had indeed planned to support him. Ultimately, however, they signed a written agreement with the incumbent.

Ratu Atut Chosiyah was the daughter of local strongman Tubagus Chasan Sochib (deceased), whose family-run Banten in classic strongman fashion.[8] While a member of Golkar, she had allies in all the major parties, most of which formally supported her candidacy in 2011. But a narrow margin over Wahidin in the polls meant that she needed to fight hard to retain the governorship (Interview with South Tangerang legislator, May 2012).[9] While no champion of progressive politics, Atut had shown some commitment to workers, even joining union leaders on the back of a truck during a worker demonstration in the early 2000s when she was vice-governor (Interview with SBSI 1992 Tangerang branch leader, May 2012). During the campaign, Atut focused on developing a relationship with the leaders of the large unions who sat on the provincial tripartite council. In addition to patronage benefits, they extracted a series of programmatic commitments, including a pledge to favor workers during wage negotiations in return for the union backing (Interview with union officials, May 2012). Atut delivered on her core promises, supporting workers in minimum wage negotiations and providing funds not only to all registered company-level unions in the province for capacity building, but also for May Day celebrations and to pay for a number of union officials to participate in the minor hajj (Interview with KSPSI Tangerang district head, February 2014).

Unions had a limited time to capitalize on their relationship with Atut, as she was arrested in late 2013 and formally charged with corruption in May 2014. Her deputy, former television star and businessman, Rano Karno – who

[8] A number of her close family members have also held executive or legislative positions in the province.

[9] Jazuli, the PKS candidate supported by the unions in Tangerang district in 2008, was the third candidate.

had no interest in engaging with the unions – was appointed to serve out the term. Months before the 2017 gubernatorial race, the alliance of large unions announced during a rally of thousands of workers outside the governor's office that they would not support Rano Karno's re-election because he rarely met with union leaders and did not support them in the minimum wage negotiations (Hifni 2016). They instead threw their support behind Wahidin (Interviews with union leaders in Tangerang, May 2017), who signed a formal agreement with some key unions. In that agreement, he undertook to ignore Government Regulation No. 78/2015 on Minimum Wage-Setting, a regulation that required minimum wage raises to be set on a formula based on inflation and economic growth. Since the minimum wage was no longer negotiated, the link between the wage councils and local executive elections was severed, and unions could no longer leverage local elections or cascade effects between jurisdictions to their advantage.[10] He also promised to improve the performance of the local manpower office and introduce a local labor regulation (Interview with FSPMI Tangerang branch official, June 2017). But the unions were divided. Andi Gani supported his fellow PDIP cadre but the Tangerang municipality branch, which is aligned with the Yorrys faction, supported Wahidin. Similarly, SPN's provincial branch initially supported Wahidin and the local branch chose not to come out for either of the leading candidates (Interviews, May 2017). Once in office, Wahidin's performance was mixed: he bent to pressure from the central government to comply with the wage-setting regulation but provided compensation in the form of health and education measures that benefitted workers.

As in the Batam case, unions' experience in Tangerang municipality reveals the potential benefits of entering into a political contract with a successful candidate, including access to policy-makers and substantive benefits for members, particularly in the context of minimum wage negotiations. The Tangerang case also shows how much more effective unions can be if they pool their resources rather than striking individual agreements, as occurred in Batam. But it is not always easy to maintain unity within a union, as became evident in successive political contracts reached in Gresik, an industrial suburb of East Java's capital, Surabaya.

Gresik

As in Tangerang, alliances were a key feature of union engagement in successive executive elections in Gresik (Table 5.4). In Gresik's first district head race, held in June 2005, a number of unions – including the influential

[10] In many countries, this regulation would be considered progressive, since it guaranteed maintenance of real wages. Even in Indonesia, some labor activists believed that it would benefit workers, particularly in areas where unions are weak (Interviews, March 2016). Sectoral minimum wages could still be negotiated on the wage councils, but the regulation stipulated that they would be decided through bipartite, not tripartite, negotiations.

TABLE 5.4. *Union contracts with candidates in executive races in Gresik district*

Election	Team	Key Parties	Union(s) Involved	Nature of Contract	Key Elements of Contract		Outcomes	
					Patronage	Programmatic	Unions	Candidates
District head (2010)	Sambari Radianto Mohammad Qosim (won)	Golkar PKPI	Sekber Alliance	Oral in first round, written in second	• Building for Sekber	• Reduce outsourcing, protections • Labor court • Minimum wages as high as Surabaya	• Publicized contract in factories • Joined campaign team	• Matched Surabaya wages • Established labor court • Office for Sekber
Governor (2013)	Soekarwo Saifullah Yusuf (incumbent, won)	All 10 parties represented in parliament	KSBSI FSPMI (regional)	Oral		• Enforce standards and procedures • Crack-down on outsourcing	• FSPMI issued written instruction • Jointly hosted Ramadhan events • Participated in key campaign meetings	• No Gov. Reg. No. 78/2015 • Local labor regulation
	Bambang Dwi Hartono Said Abdullah (lost)	PDIP	FSP KEP FSPMI (branch)	Oral		• Sectoral wages • Crack-down on outsourcing • Worker health card • Local labor regulations	• Symbolic only	
District head (2015)	Sambari Radianto Mohammad Qosim (won)	Demokrat PKB	FSP KEP and Serbu Setan	n/a		• General promises about worker welfare	• Instructed members to vote • FSP KEP secretariat as campaign office • Arranged factory visits/other events	• Intervened directly on workers' behalf in cases with management • But no support on sectoral wages

(continued)

TABLE 5.4 *(continued)*

Election	Team	Key Parties	Union(s) Involved	Nature of Contract	Key Elements of Contract		Outcomes	
					Patronage	Programmatic	Unions	Candidates
Governor (2018)	Khofifah Emil Dardak (won)	PPP Golkar	Forum Aliansi SP/SB Jatim	Written		• More Manpower staff • Unions monitoring industrial relations • Reduce unemployment • Unions in policy forums	• Coordination meetings • Factory visits • Instructed members to vote	
	Saifullah Yusuf Puti Guntur Soekarno (former deputy governor, lost)	PKB PDIP PKS Gerindra	KSPI (primarily FSPMI)	Written		• No Gov. Reg. No. 78/2015 • Better conditions for women workers • Better factory inspections and control of outsourcing • Worker housing • Free education/ health care • Control of foreign workers • Industrial relations app	• Consolidation of activities in worker districts around East Java	

Federation of Chemical, Energy and Mining Workers Unions (*Federasi Serikat Pekerja Kimia, Energi dan Pertambangan*, FSP KEP) – had provided passive support for the challenger, Sambari Halim Radianto, who had served as deputy mayor in the previous administration. A number of other unions did the same for the incumbent, who won the race. As Sambari prepared to run again in 2010, he approached Nandar, the head of FSP KEP's Gresik branch, who agreed to support him via Sekber, the alliance formed by major unions in the district to coordinate on wages. In return for the unions' support, Sambari undertook to improve enforcement of the Manpower Law, complete the process of establishing a labor court in Gresik,[11] and ensure that minimum wages were at least as high as in Surabaya. He also promised to provide a secretariat for Sekber (Interviews with Sekber activist, February 2014).

When another candidate was declared the winner, Sambari contested the election result, alleging that there had been massive and systematic irregularities in the election. The case went to the Constitutional Court, which ordered new elections in nine of Gresik's eighteen electoral districts. Two of these electoral districts – Driyorejo and Kebomas – were recognized "labor pockets" (*kantong buruh*). Little had been done before the election to mobilize union members' votes, but FSP KEP now sprang into action, inserting an activist into the campaign team, where he worked closely with Sambari's running mate to mobilize the members of Sekber (Interview with FSP KEP Gresik branch head, February 2014). FSP KEP also used the resources of a second network, called the Joint Secretariat for Workers in the Southern Region (*Sekretariat Bersama Pekerja Buruh Bersatu Wilayah Selatan*, Serbu Setan), to introduce the candidates and publicize the contents of the political contract among workplace unions (Interview with FSP KEP Gresik branch officials, May 2013). These efforts paid off handsomely: Sambari's vote increased from 27 percent to 61 percent in Driyorejo and from 48 percent to 63 percent in Kebomas (KPU Kabupaten Gresik 2012a, 2012b).

This time around, Sambari won. Once in office, he delivered on his core promises of matching minimum wage levels in Surabaya and completing the establishment of a labor court in Gresik. He did less well on his other undertakings. Although he provided access to a building to Sekber, unionists were not impressed by its quality. He also performed poorly with regard to the enforcement of the Manpower Law, particularly in the areas of outsourcing and forced dismissals, and failed to deliver on sectoral wages (Interview with FSP KEP Gresik branch head, June 2015). Yet although he had largely kept his promises, support for Sambari had eroded by the time he launched his 2015 campaign for re-election because many union leaders felt ignored. Sekber remained neutral, even printing a banner announcing that "Sekber supports none of

[11] As in Batam, unionists in Gresik were forced to travel to the provincial capital to attend a labor court.

the candidates" (Interview with FSP KEP Gresik branch secretary, March 2016). However, Nandar – who had been the driving force in the relationship – continued to engage, offering use of the FSP KEP secretariat as a campaign office (*posko kemenangan*) and instructing FSP KEP members to vote for him (Interview with FSP KEP Gresik branch head, June 2015). These actions were met with dissension within the union, with branch secretary Apin Sirait declaring his support for the opposition candidate (Interview with FSP KEP Gresik branch secretary, March 2016). Ultimately, Apin's preferred candidate refused to sign a political contract, prompting him to withdraw his support and encourage members to vote as they wished (Interview with FSP KEP Gresik branch secretary, March 2016). The disagreement also meant that there was no formal political contract with Sambari, only some general promises that he would safeguard workers' interests (Interview with FSP KEP president, February 2019).

Unions in East Java also did deals with candidates in successive gubernatorial races. In both cases, support was split. In 2013, some unions supported the incumbent, Soekarwo, while others supported the challenger, Bambang Dwi Hartono. In FSPMI's case, support was split. Both Soekarwo and Bambang pledged to enforce labor standards and crack-down on outsourcing. Soekarwo rewarded unions for supporting him by ignoring Government Regulation No. 78/2015 in his final year in office and introducing a local labor regulation. Five years later, KSPI reached a written agreement with the former deputy governor, Saifullah Yusuf, which was publicized in the union's national newspaper (*Koran Perdjoengan,* 3 April 2018). However, a key union alliance – the membership of which included some KSPI affiliates – entered into a written contract with Khofifah, the former minister for health, who was running for PPP. In return for promises of better staffing for the Manpower office, involvement of union representation in industrial relations monitoring, funding to support their engagement in policy-making, and a strategy to deal with unemployment, members of the alliance not only organized coordination meetings and factory visits, but issued instructions to their members to support her candidacy.[12] The agreement attracted significant media coverage (see, e.g., *Radar Malang,* 2 June 2018), as did Khofifah's visit to the grave of worker hero Marsinah on May Day (*Tempo,* 1 May 2018).[13] Following her election, she thanked unions for their support and made repeated statements indicating her support for workers' rights (*Rmol Jatim,* 3 March 2019).[14] Khofifah renewed her commitment to workers on May Day in 2019, when she signed a pledge committing her to nine action points, which included lobbying the government to revise Government Regulation No. 78/2015, supporting sectoral wages, improving law enforcement, and issuing reprimands to errant employers.[15]

[12] Copy of the declaration provided to the authors.
[13] For details of Marsinah's story, see Ford (2003a).
[14] At the time of writing, it was too early to tell to what extent Khofifah's campaign promises would materialize.
[15] Copy of the pledge provided to the authors.

The Gresik case reinforces the importance of personal relationships between candidates and key union leaders and the associated risks of internal division. However, it also illustrates unions' potential impact on election outcomes when they move beyond abstract promises to member mobilization. While engagement was piecemeal and sporadic, Sekber's intervention in the supplementary round of the 2010 district head election demonstrates that unions can have a substantive effect on electoral outcomes in industrial areas when they work together to actively mobilize workers in support of a candidate. This possibility is borne out in Bekasi, where activists from a range of unions came out in support of PDIP candidate Rieke Diah Pitaloka in the gubernatorial race of 2013.

Bekasi

Unions in Bekasi district had come relatively late to electoral politics (Table 5.5). None of the major unions became involved as organizations in the lead-up to the first district head race in March 2007, even though some union leaders felt that the incumbent had been supportive in minimum wage negotiations. This began to change in the 2012 election, when a number of candidates approached unions asking for their support. SPN entered into a political contract with PDIP candidate Darip Mulyana in return for promises of operational support for the union (Interview with SPN Bekasi branch official, June 2012). FSPMI hedged its bets by embedding union activists in the campaign teams of all of the candidates while concluding a backroom deal with Golkar candidate Neneng Hasanah Yasin, who had committed publicly to issuing a local regulation on outsourcing, improving educational opportunities for workers, and establishing a labor court in Bekasi. No official announcement was made, but union leaders agreed to speak favorably about her to members. In exchange, Neneng indicated that she would be amenable to building a more permanent home for Omah Buruh, a make-shift gathering place for workers that FSPMI had erected on a partially completed bridge (Interview with FSPMI Bekasi branch official, June 2012). Neneng also gained the support of KSPSI officials, who invited her to its anniversary event, where she had the opportunity to speak to an audience of about 500 members. But it, too, stopped short of a formal endorsement (Interview with KSPSI Bekasi branch official, June 2012).

The mood had changed considerably by the time of the West Java gubernatorial race in 2013. Emboldened by the success of their push for universal social security, the national committees of the major unions decided to support the candidacy of Rieke Diah Pitaloka, the PDIP legislator who had worked closely with them on the social security campaign. In order to strengthen Rieke's chances of receiving the party's nomination, MPBI – the short-lived umbrella group uniting the three largest confederations – sent a letter on 2 November 2012 to PDIP leader Megawati Sukarnoputri, appealing to her to select Rieke and nominating Obon Tabroni as her running mate (PUK-SPAMK FSPMI 2012,

TABLE 5.5. *Union contracts with candidates in executive races in Bekasi district*

Election	Team	Key Parties	Union(s) Involved	Nature of Contract	Key Elements of Contract		Outcomes	
					Patronage	Programmatic	Unions	Candidates
District head (2012)	Darip Mulyana Jejen Sayuti (lost)	PDIP Gerindra PBB	SPN	Written	• Operational support	• Cheap worker housing • End outsourcing • Labor regulations	• In-principle support only	
	Neneng Hasanah Yasin Rohim Mintareja (incumbent, won)	Golkar Demokrat PAN	FSPMI	Oral	• Building for Omah Buruh	• Local labor regulation • Training for workers • Labor court in Bekasi	• Created opportunities to address workers	• Agreed to large increase in UMK first year in office
Governor (2013)	Rieke Diah Pitaloka Teten Masduki (lost)	PDIP	MPBI then coalition of unionists including from KSPSI, KSBSI, FSPMI	Oral		• General support for workers (but strong track record)	• MPBI wrote formal letter of support • Volunteer team • Campaign office • Collected funds for the campaign • Invited Rieke to worker gatherings • Door-knocking	
	Ahmad Heryawan Deddy Mizwa (won)	PKS PPP Hanura PBB	Bandung-based Aliansi Serikat Pekerja/ Serikat Buruh (ASPSB)	Written	• Funding for training • Buildings for unions that signed the contract	• Sectoral minimum wage • More labor inspectors • Cheap worker housing • Action against employers acting illegally • Free education for children of workers	• Bekasi unions not involved	• Promises not kept

Election	Team	Key Parties	Union(s) Involved	Nature of Contract	Key Elements of Contract		Outcomes	
					Patronage	Programmatic	Unions	Candidates
District head (2017)	Obon Tabroni Bambang Sumaryono (lost)	Independent	FSPMI, SPN, KSPI, KSPSI, KPBI, KASBI	Union candidate				
Governor (2018)	Ajat Sudrajat Ahmad Syaikhu (lost)	Gerindra PKS	KSPI	Written	• Support to create a joint union secretariat	• No Gov. Reg. No. 78/2015 • Sectoral wage every year • End outsourcing etc • Subsidized housing and transport for workers • Employment for locals • Education and healthcare • Pension program	• Union member on campaign team • Formed volunteer corps • Held events for candidates • Socialization of platform	

Suhartono 2012). Six days later, PDIP announced that Rieke would run on the PDIP ticket alongside Teten Masduki, a respected civil society figure with a track record on labor issues, who had also polled well in West Java.

While MPBI formally withdrew its support for Rieke, her candidacy was embraced by labor activists across a range of unions, including Obon himself (Manumoyoso 2012). Rieke's supporters formed a volunteer campaigning organization (*tim relawan*), through which activists from a variety of unions campaigned in industrial areas. FSPMI was a prominent player. Nyumarno, the FSPMI member who went on to win a seat as a union candidate on a PDIP ticket in the 2014 legislative election, worked on her campaign. For the first time ever, a union engaged in fund-raising for a non-union candidate. FSPMI collected Rp 3.4 million when Rieke attended a wedding at Omah Buruh, and an additional Rp 2.1 million later that day (*Kompas,* 12 November 2012).[16] Although she did not win, Rieke finished a close second to the incumbent. Importantly, she performed very well in key industrial areas, garnering 36.27 percent of the vote in Bekasi district and 39.02 percent in Karawang district – areas where the incumbent gained just 30.38 and 27.02 percent, respectively. Her performance was much weaker in other parts of West Java, where clothing and textiles are the dominant industry and FSPMI has less of a hold.

Unionists' support for Rieke's election campaign was significant for three main reasons. First, as in the case of Hakim's candidacy in the Batam mayoral race of 2011, they chose to back a candidate with a history of taking principled stands on labor issues rather than the one most likely to win. Second, the campaign involved activists from a range of unions, who threw themselves into the campaign even after their national leaders withdrew support. Third, Rieke's performance in FSPMI strongholds helped convince its strategists that it could potentially generate enough support to field a credible campaign for a union candidate in the 2017 district head election.

Lessons Learnt

Each of these political experiments took place within the context of an emerging opportunity structure created by the introduction of direct elections at the local level and the devolution of the wage-setting processes (Caraway and Ford 2017, Caraway, Ford, and Nguyen 2019). The absence of a programmatic labor party, and the fact that candidates most often run as individuals with party backing rather than as party representatives, meant that the labor movement's intervention in executive races took the form of a series of short-term transactional deals. These deals, moreover, were largely opportunistic. However, they were not just about patronage. As we have seen here,

[16] While Rp 5.5 million is an insignificant amount in a gubernatorial race, the event represented a rare instance of a non-elite group publicly raising small donations to support a reformist candidate.

programmatic demands were made in all but the very earliest races. What is more, unions did manage to secure concrete benefits for their members in a number of elections, most often in the form of a significant bump in minimum wages sometimes even approved in defiance of central government directives. In some cases, they also achieved broader policy gains in the form of a local labor regulation or direct intervention in prominent cases where management had not complied with labor law. The very fact of union involvement also elevated the status of labor issues as campaign issues – as seen in Batam, where politically active members within FSPMI succeeded in generating a climate in which politicians felt obliged to explain their stance on labor issues to the public in televised debates and in intensive print and online media coverage of candidates' engagement with workers at not only the local but also provincial levels in the gubernatorial campaigns of Banten, Khofifah (East Java), and Rieke (West Java).

But political contracts are only credible where unions have proven that they can mobilize the worker vote. The Tangerang and Gresik cases demonstrated the benefits of working through an alliance, though the difficulties of establishing and maintaining shared political goals became all too clear in the Gresik case. It was also clear, most notably in Batam, that fragmentation or a lack of discipline within a union reduces its capacity to influence a future election. There must also be consequences if candidates do not abide by the terms to which they have agreed. As these four case studies have shown, those consequences sometimes take the form of a public withdrawal of support. In others, they took the form of mass mobilizations targeting the executive office-holder concerned. As in the national policy arena, these sanctions proved most effective in Tangerang and Bekasi, where unions' capacity for grassroots mobilization was augmented by the extra potential for disruption inherent in being so close to Jakarta.

Gains were nevertheless uncertain: even where unions backed winners and those winners sought to honor their commitments, union demands inevitably jostled with a multitude of other priorities. As a consequence, many programmatic undertakings were not fulfilled. It is these risks that drove the much less common union strategy of fielding union candidates in a local executive race, as occurred in the industrial districts of Deli Serdang, on the outskirts of North Sumatra's provincial capital Medan and Bekasi in West Java.

FIELDING LABOR CANDIDATES

Unionists believed that many of the benefits associated with a successful political contract – potential policy influence, the opportunity to build political awareness among union members, and the chance to broaden the role of the regional union alliances – could be enhanced if union candidates were themselves elected. Such a victory would also constitute an opportunity not only for the labor movement to influence the local political landscape, but also to set an example for

other union-dense localities. If that candidate ran as an independent, the risks of capture, internal division, and member disenchantment diminished. At the same time, fielding a union candidate for executive office is a high-risk strategy. Not only is it potentially much more resource-hungry, but the chances of winning are also slim. In order to have any chance of success, a union candidate must be able to mobilize a strong core of labor voters, either by virtue of that union's own membership density or through an alliance with other unions whose members are willing to put aside their own need for recognition in order to support a candidate from a different union. In addition, the candidate must appeal to a broader public beyond the confines of worker communities. Even where these basic requirements are met, union candidates confront many difficulties. They must collect copies of enough identity cards (*kartu tanda penduduk*, KTP) to be able to register and accrue sufficient financial and other resources to mount a credible campaign in a high-stakes, winner-takes-all context. Although these challenges proved to be too great in Deli Serdang and Bekasi, FSPMI candidate Obon Tabroni's performance in the Bekasi race provides a glimpse of what could be possible if unions came together and backed a labor candidate in a union-dense industrial area.

Deli Serdang

Unionists lined up behind Bambang Hermanto, a former factory worker and union official, who had run for the position of deputy district head in Deli Serdang in October 2013. Bambang had previous experience of electoral politics, having run unsuccessfully in the 2009 legislative election. His candidacy came about as a result of an organizational decision within the local branch of SBSI 1992, a union with a strong footprint in North Sumatra. Having surveyed members to determine if they were prepared to support Bambang as an independent candidate, branch leaders decided that he should run. Until 2008, candidates seeking election as regional heads had required party backing. New provisions meant that local power-brokers could now run for office without the backing of a political party, but independent candidates had to clear high administrative hurdles. They were required to collect photocopies of identity cards from 3 to 6.5 percent of voters across 50 percent of the electoral district in order to qualify. After two months of collecting identity card copies for the verification process, SBSI 1992 activists realized that they were unlikely to meet the target. It was at this point that Bambang approached the other unions in the multi-union alliance that had coalesced around the minimum wage negotiation process. In all, eleven unions agreed to establish a campaign team.

When Bambang learned that Harun Nuh, the head of an indigenous land rights organization, was also thinking of running, representatives of several unions within the alliance approached Harun to discuss the possibility of teaming up. It was later decided that Harun would lead the ticket, as he had collected copies of almost three times as many identity cards at that stage

(Interview with Bambang Hermanto, December 2013). Together, the candidates went on to collect 76,306 identity cards – significantly more than the 61,721 required to pass verification (*Utama News*, 29 May 2013). According to union sources, over half of that number was collected by the Deli Serdang union alliance (Interviews, December 2013).

Despite this promising start, Bambang's campaign foundered on a lack of preparation caused in part by the porousness of the union alliance. Several other unions did assist by providing members' names, addresses, and telephone numbers to the campaign team, and holding meetings in union strongholds, where they explained who the team was and what they stood for. However, their enthusiasm waned quickly, especially in cases where leaders from other unions in the alliance had links to political parties. Since many unionists were also party cadres, this posed a serious problem for the campaign (Interview with union officials, December 2013). Indeed, three unions withdrew from the campaign team as the race approached because officials hoping to run in legislative races in 2014 were concerned that they would be blacklisted by their parties (Interview with union officials, December 2013). The issue of political affiliation even caused difficulties within SBSI 1992 itself: provincial head Pahala Napitupulu was also the deputy head of the provincial Gerindra branch and so could not publicly support Bambang.

The lack of material resources was also important. Bambang's own branch contributed financially, raising a small war chest for the campaign, and Pahala donated brochures and other campaign materials to the team on the quiet (Interviews with Bambang Hermanto and Pahala Napitupulu, December 2013). But, since no other union provided money, several key campaign strategies including a survey to identify union interests and outreach to non-unionized factories had to be jettisoned (Interviews with member of the campaign team, June 2013 and December 2013). Not surprisingly, Harun and Bambang came eighth in a field of the eleven, gaining just 15,745 of the 545,777 votes cast. According to PDIP official, Effendi Panjaitan, who is also a long-term social movement activist, this result was predictable:

> It would have been an excellent outcome for the labor movement, as a district head is much more influential than a member of the legislature. But it is also a much bigger ask. There is no way the workers were ready to take on the challenge. Suddenly they appeared, without a proper agreement, and without real support from below. They should have had at least a few years of preparation. Then maybe it could have worked. It did mean something that the unions tried to collaborate, but it didn't mean enough that they could win (Interview, October 2014).

As Effendi points out, the absence of preparation – and especially grassroots mobilization – meant that Bambang's campaign was doomed to fail. There are nevertheless valuable lessons to be learned from the Deli Serdang union alliance's attempts to wrest control of the local executive. Chief among these is confirmation that the absence of a dedicated labor party is likely to foster

a multitude of partisan alliances among union elites, which makes it difficult for them to come together in support of a union candidate.

Bekasi

A key difference between the campaigns in Deli Serdang and Bekasi was the nature of the union that was backing the candidate and the level of political experience of its Bekasi branch. SBSI 1992 may have been an important union in Deli Serdang, but FSPMI has some 70,000 members in Bekasi, whose mobilizational skills had been honed through incredibly successful wage campaigns in recent years. In addition, the branch had a great deal of political experience, having supported Rieke's campaign for governor in 2013, running an "all-out" campaign for the legislative races in 2014, and turning out working-class votes for Prabowo in the 2014 presidential race.[17] These increasingly focused campaigns bolstered FSPMI's confidence about Obon's prospects in the district head race.

Obon and his supporters started planning well before election day. Having set up a campaign office called the Obon Tabroni Center in 2015, preparations began in earnest from March 2016, when the campaign had five teams on weekdays and fifteen teams on weekends working to generate support for Obon's candidacy. The bar was even higher than it had been for Bambang because a 2015 law had increased the proportion of identity cards required between 6.5 and 10 percent across more than 50 percent of electoral districts.[18] By June 2016, the team claimed to have collected copies of 250,000 identity cards, almost double the number required. To underline his working-class identity, Obon personally delivered 156,000 by forklift to the electoral commission in August 2016, accompanied by 1,500 supporters (Yudha 2016).[19] His candidacy was officially announced in September after the electoral commission completed the verification of the identity cards and determined that he had met the requirements (*Go Bekasi*, 11 September 2016).

The team campaigned tirelessly, emphasizing wages, local labor regulations, education, and health when dealing with workers, and roads and water supply to the rice paddies when dealing with farmers. In order to

[17] See Chapter 6 for details of this campaign and Chapter 7 for details of FSPMI's role in the 2014 presidential race.

[18] The precise percentage required depends on population size. See Law No. 8/2015 concerning Revisions to Law No. 1/2015 concerning the Legalization of Government Regulations replacing Law No. 1/2014 concerning the Election of Governors, District Heads and Mayors. The Constitutional Court subsequently ruled that the support needed should be based on the number of registered voters in the last election rather than the total population (Husein 2016).

[19] Only 135,000 were necessary. The team chose to withhold the rest in reserve for a second round of verification in case the electoral commission assessment put them below the number required.

maximize his opportunity to engage with non-workers, Obon relied on other FSPMI members to run the campaign in worker communities (Interview with Obon Tabroni, May 2017). Obon himself traveled from sub-district to sub-district to raise awareness of his candidacy and demonstrate his credentials as a man of the people. During these visits, Obon made a point of engaging with women, providing free milk for children and talking about health and education (Field observations, March 2016) – a strategy based on the results of a survey of 500 people, which suggested housewives as his second most important constituency after workers. The team also leveraged FSPMI's ongoing monitoring program for recipients of universal health insurance, using an ambulance with Obon's face painted on the side to transport people to hospital. In addition, they engaged in some community projects, for example, fogging for mosquitoes (Interview with campaign manager, May 2017).

Obon and his supporters had decided that he should register as an independent candidate in order to sidestep the internally divisive issue of partisan allegiances.[20] But while FSPMI's Bekasi branch went "all out," support from other unions was not as strong as the team had hoped (Interview with Obon Tabroni, May 2017). A number did endorse his candidacy, an enormous breakthrough in a local context where inter-union tensions were high. KSPI asked that each of its constituent federations issue an instruction to their members to support Obon, which most of them did (Interview with campaign manager, May 2017). Even though PDIP had a candidate in the race, Andi Gani came out strongly for Obon, making a personal donation of 25 million rupiahs in cash – though he stopped short of issuing a formal instruction for members to support Obon (Interview with Andi Gani, February 2019). This support was not replicated at the local level, where intense rivalry between KSPSI and FSPMI meant Obon's repeated approaches to the KSPSI branch leadership initially fell on deaf ears (Interview with KSPSI Bekasi officials, May 2017) – though KSPSI was among the 19 unions that pledged to turn out 700,000 voters for Obon just days before the election (*Berita Cikarang*, 5 February 2017).[21]

[20] Obon's choice of running mate – Bambang Sumaryono, a factory manager – was unexpected. Justifying the choice, Obon explained "The factors that I considered were straightforward. I need a sounding board. I need someone with the same vision and mission. I need someone who is dedicated to Bekasi and not just looking for a position. These were the main reasons I chose Bambang as my running mate" (*KlikBekasi*, 22 June 2016). Bambang was expected to pay for his activities but brought no other financial resources to the campaign (Interview with campaign manager, May 2017).

[21] In early 2016, the head of KSPSI's Bekasi branch was backed into a corner when Obon showed up at the inauguration ceremony for a plant-level union. Andi Gani was there and heartily endorsed Obon. Attendees recorded Abdullah stating that Obon was an exceptional candidate and that it was incumbent on all of Bekasi's workers to vote for him. Obon's supporters then circulated this quote on social media. Later in the year, Abdullah was also quoted in the press as hoping that Obon would win (*Go Bekasi*, 8 September 2016).

In the final tally, Obon secured 208,223 votes, placing third with 17.6 percent of the votes, behind Neneng, who retained office with 39.8 percent of the votes, and former district head Sa'dudin, who captured 26.1 percent of the votes. Significantly, he out-polled the PDIP candidate and another independent (KPU 2017). But despite his strong performance, the failure to succeed in this winner-takes-all race led to deep disappointment among the union members who had campaigned so hard for him, and a sense of being out in the cold. As Obon's campaign manager observed, "There's a lot of disappointment about losing … FSPMI and Obon were shaken" (Interview, May 2017). It also made things more difficult for the union in its industrial work than they may have been if they had supported the winning candidate: "We knew all of the risks going in – that if our candidate lost that there'd be a price to pay. But it's rough now. Neneng tells us to move on if we stage a demonstration. We are being ignored" (Interview with campaign manager, May 2017).

Lessons Learnt

The Deli Serdang and Bekasi campaigns shared some important similarities (Table 5.6). Both grew out of a desire to implement worker-friendly policies in union-dense regions, both involved one of the strongest unions in the district, and both understood the importance of reaching out to other unions. The campaigns were very different, however, in their scope and sophistication. Bambang's campaign team was tiny, while Obon had the support of hundreds of volunteers from FSPMI's strike force, Garda Metal, and from outside the union. Bambang's campaign team focused exclusively on industrial workers, while Obon's understood the importance of reaching out to non-worker constituencies. While both unions fundraised, SBSI 1992 raised a small amount of money whereas FSPMI raised several billion rupiahs, in cash and in-kind, support for Obon.

These differences aside, the campaigns confirmed two important lessons. First, they revealed that the assumption that union leaders would eschew their party loyalties and put aside organizational rivalries to support a labor candidate was flawed. Second, the candidates and their supporters were proved wrong in assuming that support for a unionist's attempt to register would translate into actual votes. These (bitter) lessons notwithstanding, Obon's campaign generated a level of member engagement far in excess of any other executive head race. As such, it demonstrated that the mobilizational power of the union movement could conceivably level a playing field awash with patronage resources that a union leader cannot hope to match.

TABLE 5.6. *Strategies, achievements, and failures*

Union Candidate	Strategy	Achievements	Failures
Bambang SBSI 1992 Deputy district head Deli Serdang	• Mobilized wage alliance to collect evidence of support • Teamed up with another social movement candidate • Union members donated time and resources • Focused exclusively on workers • (Unrealized) plans to hold a survey to identify union priorities and to target non-unionized workplaces	• Union alliance collected copies of over 35,000 identity cards and assisted with contact details and introductions to factory leaders • Bambang's branch raised a small but symbolically important amount of campaign funding	• Failed to develop a broader constituency among workers, let alone non-workers • Funding raised did not allow campaign team to follow through on plans • Support from union alliance (and provincial head of own union) compromised by competing political affiliations • Secured just 15,745 of votes (2.9 percent)
Obon FSPMI District head Bekasi	• Established Obon Tabroni Center • Union members donated time and resources; support also from farmers, fishers, and youth • Emphasized wages, education, and healthcare in worker-dense suburbs • Used health campaign to target a broader base • Campaigned on water for farming and roads when talking to farmers • Sought support from other unions	• Instructions from most KSPI federations and support from other unions • Mobilized large and effective campaign team • Branch generated significant financial and in-kind resources for the campaign • Resulted in stronger networks with the public • Secured 208,223 votes (17.6 percent)	• Intensive use of resources meant that other elements of union work were put aside • Attempts to muster support from other unions were largely unsuccessful • Heavy blow to morale when Obon lost

CONCLUSION

Through their maneuvering in executive races, unions began to probe the ways that lower-class actors can advance their agenda through a more robust engagement in Indonesia's evolving democracy. In addition to educating union activists about the dynamics of electoral contests, these political experiments broadened unions' self-conception, and the perception of others, about their role in society. Even more remarkable – given that working-class Indonesians had long been told that they should concentrate on development, not politics, and that unions had no place in the political arena (Ford 2009) – is the fact that grassroots labor activists like Obon and Bambang dared to imagine themselves not just as clients of a successful district leadership team, but as capable of assuming those leadership positions.

At the same time, unions took risks in pursuing this strategy of active political engagement. Investing in electoral politics drains human and financial resources and had the potential to divide the leadership and the membership over the alliances they pursued. These political experiments proved far more difficult than mobilizing workers around wages. As both political contracts and attempts to field labor candidates demonstrated, actually securing votes is a very different thing from mobilizing in the streets:

> In politics, ambitions are more abstract. It's no longer about things like wages or social security, which are very concrete. For example, the local government's budget allocates far too much to routine expenses like meetings and uniforms. We could build worker housing with that money. But it's very difficult to mobilize workers around these more abstract ideas (Interview with FSPMI president, October 2016).

Unions' attempts to influence executive races at the local and provincial levels were nevertheless important – and not just in terms of the programmatic leverage they provided in minimum wage negotiations and other elements of labor policy. Taking the fight for wages and conditions to the ballot box in executive races was an important development in Indonesia's patronage-driven polity, with its non-programmatic party system. But, as the next chapter attests, the challenge of translating members' commitment to their unions into a commitment to follow their political strategy was even more evident in the legislative races of 2009 and 2014.

6

Legislative Contests

Executive hopefuls were not the only political players to woo the unions from the mid-2000s. Keen to access the voting blocs they assumed unions controlled, parties old and new, large and small, approached prominent union leaders to run on their legislative tickets in union-dense locations as early as 2004 (Ford and Tjandra 2007). Almost all major unions initially maintained a fiercely non-partisan stance with regard to party alliances, fearful that they would be co-opted and lose their independence. However, some prominent union cadres ran despite these concerns. These cadres did not officially represent their organizations, but they were wooed first and foremost because of their organizational base, a resource they expected to draw on in the course of the campaign. Aware of this fact – and encouraged by early experiences backing winners in executive races – branch leaders and central strategists began to consider the possibility of harnessing the votes of their members to elect labor candidates.

In many ways, electing labor candidates to legislative office was more feasible than for executive offices. Fewer votes were needed, as few as several thousand in some local races. Moreover, in local legislative races, unions could focus their efforts on a small number of worker-rich electoral districts rather than having to appeal to vastly different cohorts of voters across a whole district or municipality. But there were also significant challenges, the most important being that legislative candidates require a party affiliation to run – and in the absence of a viable labor party, this requirement meant that unions were forced to deal with established parties.[1] Aligning with a party, in turn, presented new difficulties. Where cadres or members had preexisting partisan affiliations or affinities, cadres and members needed to be convinced

[1] With the exception of Aceh, new parties must prove that they have a national footprint in order to compete in elections (Horowitz 2013).

to set these aside and support the labor candidate. Equally challenging was the problem of inter- and intra-union competition, which divided the worker vote in the electoral districts where union cadres were most likely to succeed. If elected, despite all of this, candidates would hold divided loyalties to their party and their union, in which case their party generally won out. Yet, despite these obvious problems, candidates from a broad range of unions ran for the legislature in all major industrial regions in 2009, and again in 2014 and 2019.

Why did some unions decide to adopt an organizational approach to electoral politics while others did not? And, having done so, what accounts for the success or failure of those approaches? Having discussed the evolving context of party–union engagement, this chapter turns its attention to the two unions that adopted an organizational approach to the legislative arena in the period between 2004 and 2019. Here, it compares the course of their electoral engagement over time, highlighting the role of leadership, membership density, organizational culture, and organizational learning in determining their different trajectories. The chapter then concludes by reflecting on the significant limitations to the strategy of running legislative candidates for a wide array of parties without programmatic commitments to labor issues, and the uncertain returns of doing so even where a union-backed candidate secures a seat. As it argues, unions' strategy may have made sense in the absence of programmatic parties, but the pay-off for this kind of electoral engagement is uncertain given hurdles faced, and also the difficulty of marshalling support for the labor agenda in a local legislature that hosts a small number of union-backed candidates.

THE CHANGING POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

In post-New Order Indonesia, parties large and small have sought the support of different social networks to maximize their chances in the country's multi-seat electoral districts. Although none of the major parties has a left or even social democratic orientation, strategists saw the potential benefits of seeking support in industrial areas from union members. In the words of a Nasdem cadre:

> Workers are a soft target. They are educated, they have political opinions and they can organize themselves through their unions. This makes them different from other kinds of constituencies, which are more diffuse. Union members are tied to their unions because they pay dues, and clear relational structures are defined through the union hierarchy. That's why political parties approach workers through the union elites. It's seen as an easy entry point for the workers (Interview with Gemuruh activist, June 2013).[2]

[2] The Workers Mass Movement (*Gerakan Massa Buruh*, Gemuruh) is Nasdem's worker organization.

While workers have remained an attractive target for parties, the incentives to reach out to the unions have changed over time. In 2004, the inclusion of "outsiders" on a party ticket was a low-risk strategy because a closed-list proportional system was in place. In this system, voters selected a party and, barring exceptional cases, the order in which candidates appeared on the party ticket determined which candidates would be awarded seats. Party officials took advantage of this system to position union candidates as "vote-getters" without threatening the prospects of party cadres (Caraway and Ford 2014). They achieved this by offering union candidates the bottom positions on the party ticket, described in Indonesian as *nomor sepatu*, which meant that votes cast for those union candidates benefited the party cadres placed at the top of the ticket. At this point in time, union candidates who were not already party cadres had little experience of electoral politics, and many were pleased and proud simply to be invited to run.

Parties proceeded on the same assumption in the lead-up to the legislative elections of 2009, when all the major parties – including Golkar and PDIP – actively reached out to union leaders. But this strategy was disrupted by a December 2008 Constitutional Court decision that abolished the closed-list system.[3] At the time that parties were finalizing their tickets, a bottom position signaled almost certain failure. But, as a consequence of the ruling, the individual candidates receiving the most votes, rather than the first-named candidate on the party ticket, would be first in line for a seat (Buehler 2010). While it was too late for parties to alter their tickets, the introduction of the open-list system influenced party behavior. For example, PDIP introduced a requirement that external candidates must attract an additional 1,000 card-carrying members to the party and make a contribution of Rp 5 million for "technical support," a sum that was not returned if they were not selected to run in the 2014 election. And although some other parties exempted union candidates from these kinds of requirements, others required them to pay (Interview with PDIP legislator, May 2012). This did not, however, stem the tide of labor candidates running for legislative office.

Yet while all the major parties have continued to run union candidates in successive legislative elections, only PKS and Gerindra developed sustained organizational strategies toward organized labor.[4] Their engagement has followed very different trajectories: the only mainstream party to systematically invest in building a labor constituency before 2009, PKS spent almost a decade in preparation and had high hopes for its labor strategy. When none of the union cadres who ran on PKS tickets won seats in the 2009 elections,

[3] The system in place in 2004 required individual candidates to exceed 100 percent of a predefined quota in order to win a seat on the basis of his/her personal vote. In 2009, individual candidates had to exceed 30 percent of a predefined quota to win a seat on the basis of his/her personal vote, but the Constitutional Court ruling determined that seats should go to the candidates who won the most votes (Butt 2016, 4).

[4] Some other parties also attempted to develop "labor wings." One of these was Nasdem, which established Gemuruh in September 2012 (Interview with Gemuruh acting secretary, June 2013).

the party responded by rapidly scaling down its commitment.[5] By contrast, Prabowo's personal involvement with the unions, and with KSPI in particular, saw Gerindra emerge from a tentative start in 2009 to become the party with the strongest level of engagement in 2019.

PKS, a cadre-based Islamist party with a reputation for strong party discipline, was the first party to give serious attention to cultivating a labor base. Like other large parties, it saw unions as a potential voting bloc that could help increase traction in industrial districts. But its strategy of engagement with the unions was also influenced by idealistic party cadres, who managed to convince the leadership that the goals of the labor movement were in line with those of the party. As the architects of PKS's labor strategy explained it, Islam and the labor movement shared the same goals of justice and prosperity for all (Interview with Edi Zanur, May 2012).[6] But as its strategists also recognized, convincing the unions of this fact was not a quick or easy task: "When you're facing clever people you need to be clever, so the issues we choose have to really touch them. Also, it's about forming a long-term relationship. You can't just engage in the year leading up to the election" (Interview with ILF Batam coordinator, July 2007).

Party cadres began to develop a labor constituency as early as 2000, when they established a party-affiliated union. This attempt failed because of workers' suspicion of the party's involvement. As its former secretary-general observed, "They pushed us away when we approached them wearing our party clothes (*baju partai*). That's why we formed the NGO" (Interview with ILF Batam coordinator, July 2007). This NGO, the Indonesian Labor Foundation, was established in 2003 and went on to forge relationships with several unions in key industrial areas (Interview with PKS strategist, May 2012).[7] PKS subsequently formed a division for workers, farmers, and fishers (*Divisi Jaringan Buruh Tani Nelayan*, Jaburtani). Established in 2005, this division was given the task of further developing the party's union strategy. It was these efforts that underpinned its agreements with SPN and FSPMI, as well as less formal arrangements with other unions, which culminated in PKS fielding nine labor candidates from four major unions for the national legislature and dozens of labor candidates for local and provincial assemblies in union-dense electoral districts in the provinces of Banten, Central Java, West Java, and the Riau Islands in the 2009 elections (Caraway, Ford, and Nugroho 2015).

[5] Two labor representatives took seats for PKS in the new national parliament, but both had replaced candidates who could not take office.

[6] Much like the Christian and Muslim unions of the 1940s and 1950s (Ford 2003b), PKS's approach to labor relations was informed by an expectation that pious employers would treat their workers appropriately and a belief that, where they do not, workers should fight for their rights (Interview with ILF Batam coordinator, July 2007).

[7] In Jakarta, for example, the ILF established links with ASPEK, FSPMI, FSP ISI, and SPN, and worked most closely with ASPEK and SPN. It had received some financial support from unions in the state-owned telecommunications firms (Interview with ILF Batam coordinator, July 2007).

The other party that made a systematic effort to engage with the unions has been Gerindra, a nationalist party established in 2008 by Prabowo Subianto after he made an unsuccessful bid for the presidency on a Golkar ticket in 2004. While seeking to return to a less democratic more president-centered system, Gerindra appeals to small farmers, fishermen, and petty traders by deploying anti-big business and anti-foreign rhetoric (Aspinall and Mietzner 2014, Mujani and Liddle 2010). This strategy was informed by former PRD activists, who became members of the party (Budiman 2013, Simanjuntak 2014). The influence of these PRD alumni was reflected in Gerindra's grassroots mobilization strategy, which saw the establishment of a number of grassroots-oriented organizational wings including the Greater Indonesia Workers' Movement Central (*Sentral Gerakan Buruh Indonesia Raya*, Segara). According to the head of Gerindra's advocacy division, industrial workers "are the most organized sector of society" and, therefore, a particularly important constituency (Interview, June 2013). However, Gerindra's efforts in 2009 were at best haphazard. It first reached out to the unions two months before the election day, pledging to reject outsourcing and privatization, improve wages, reform employment-related insurance, and introduce a public holiday on May Day. During this period, it engaged with several unions, including elements within the three main confederations. But at that time, many union leaders viewed Gerindra with suspicion: even FSPMI's Said Iqbal described the party as "dangerous" (Interview, April 2010). As for PKS, no union-backed candidates running for Gerindra were elected in that year.

Why, then, did Gerindra continue to seek to engage with the unions where PKS had decided to pull back? A defining reason for the difference between their responses has been Prabowo's belief that organized labor had a role to play in achieving his presidential ambitions. Prabowo began wooing the unions in the lead-up to the 2009 presidential race, when he ran for vice president alongside PDIP's Megawati Sukarnoputri (Interview with Gerindra advocacy division head, June 2013). In the following year, he invited some 200 unionists to Puncak, where he encouraged them to run for Gerindra (Interview with Segara head, June 2013). In 2011, he met with prominent labor figures, offering to reserve several positions in the Ministry of Manpower for union activists in return for their support in the 2014 presidential race (Interview with OPSI general secretary, September 2014). It was at this time that he also began wooing the confederation heads including KSPI's Said Iqbal and KSBSI's Mudhofir (Interview with Segara head, February 2014). While neither joined Gerindra, KSPI recommended ten potential candidates including members of ASPEK, FSPMI, FSP KEP, and PGRI.[8] However, negotiations broke down when Gerindra asked for large sums of money for each of the candidates (Interview with KSPI president, June 2013).

[8] A copy of this correspondence (Letter No. 248/DEN-KSPI/III/201 dated 18 March, addressed to Prabowo Subianto, Head of the Supervisory Board of *Partai Gerakan Indonesia Raya* and signed by Said Iqbal) was provided to us by the head of Gerindra's advocacy division.

Having failed to woo the major confederations, Gerindra again worked most closely with SBSI 1992 and some of the state-owned enterprise unions in the lead-up to the 2014 race (Interview with Segara head, February 2014), when it targeted some fifty unionists for inclusion on Gerindra tickets (Interview with Gerindra advocacy division head, June 2013). The industrial area it focused on most closely was North Sumatra, where it had recruited Pahala Napitupulu, the provincial head of SBSI 1992, as a party cadre in 2010.[9] Pahala had first become aware of Gerinda during the 2009 election campaign, when it showered Medan with brochures questioning capitalism and urging workers to reject outsourcing and other forms of labor exploitation. He was asked to take over the party's labor section in 2010. Gerindra did not reach a formal contract with SBSI 1992's North Sumatra branch, but it did agree to run fifteen labor candidates in district-level races across the province and two at the provincial level. By the time of the actual election, only five SBSI 1992 candidates in North Sumatra actually registered to compete in the 2014 legislative elections, all of which stood for Gerindra (Interviews with SBSI 1992 provincial head, June 2013 and October 2014).

Gerindra's commitment to engagement with the unions received another boost as a consequence of developments in the lead-up to the presidential race in the same year, when Prabowo faced off against Jokowi. KSPI and KSPSI had declared their support for Jokowi in the second round of the 2012 gubernatorial race in Jakarta based on a private undertaking that workers would have his support in the minimum wage negotiation process (Interview with KSPI president, February 2014).[10] Jokowi subsequently set the 2013 wage at Rp 2,200,000 – a figure that represented a 43.8 percent increase on the 2012 figure. In the following year, however, he ignored KSPI's demands for another 50 percent hike, setting an increase for 2014 at just 6 percent. Deeply disappointed, Said Iqbal threw in his lot with Prabowo in return for a political contract requiring him to meet ten demands (Sepultura) related to classic bread-and-butter issues such as wages and outsourcing or broader policies affecting workers such as universal social security, public transport, and affordable housing and education (Purnama 2014).[11] KSPI mounted an

[9] In 2010, Gerindra also recruited SPN's deputy provincial head, Anggiat Pasaribu, who ran with the support of the union's provincial branch as a "worker candidate" in the 2014 race. A long-time PDIP voter, Anggiat, had considered running for PDIP in 2009 but was discouraged when he discovered that he would be required to make a substantial financial contribution to "grow the party" (Interview, December 2013).

[10] In a meeting held a month before the election, Iqbal asked Jokowi to commit to ending outsourcing and providing a living wage and access to quality social security. Jokowi did not publicly agree to these demands; instead reiterating his commitment to implementing a number of "pro-people" measures, including free education and health insurance, if elected (*Kompas,* 4 August 2012).

[11] Less widely publicized elements of the deal included a promise that Iqbal would be appointed Minister of Manpower in a Prabowo administration.

intense – and effective – campaign centered in FSPMI's heartland in Bekasi and, although Prabowo lost, the unions had proven that they could mobilize votes. Based on this experience, Gerindra undertook to strengthen its ties to KSPI, positioning itself to become the confederation's primary partner in 2019, when thirty-six KSPI candidates ran on Gerindra tickets.

UNION RESPONSES

Approaches by multiple political parties in the lead-up to successive legislative campaigns prompted repeated discussions within all the major unions about the appropriate response at the national level (Interviews, various years). Most large unions initially decided to maintain a non-partisan stance while allowing members – and in some cases officials – to run for office in a private capacity (Ford 2005). Over time, a number became more actively focused on legislative contests at either a national or sub-national level. Initially, however, the only unions to develop a national electoral strategy were SPN and FSPMI, both of which are KSPI affiliates, and both of which reached national-level agreements with PKS for 2009.

A number of factors help explain why some unions decided to engage *as organizations* when other unions did not, and why the paths of those that engaged diverged radically as their electoral strategies played out (Table 6.1). Chief among these are the personal beliefs and inclinations of union leaders at the national level. Membership density in a geographic area is also important, as it determines where a campaign might succeed. Once the national leadership decides to launch an electoral strategy and has identified the areas where they are most likely to elect candidates, they must assure that its many branches implement this strategy. The union's organizational culture – which encompasses the baseline level of activity at a given branch and the capacity of national and local leaders to impose discipline at different scales within the union – determines whether national strategies are implemented at the grassroots. The final key factor is the process through which unions draw lessons from past successes or failures when formulating a new strategy.

The different leadership profiles of FSPMI and SPN explain their initial decisions to engage in the legislative arena, while their membership profiles, structures, and organizational cultures account for the different geographic profiles of that engagement and the different trajectories it subsequently took. As we shall see, SPN may have been the first union to adopt an explicit strategy of fielding labor candidates, but it was FSPMI – with its stronger focus on policy, more effective chain of command, and greater capacity for organizational learning – whose legislative engagement endured and deepened.

TABLE 6.1. *Key factors affecting union engagement in legislative races*

	Unions in General	FSPMI	SPN
Leadership	National leaders' perspective on political engagement fundamental to the adoption/rejection of an organizational strategy; unsanctioned institutional engagement in some regions	Initial leadership from below; change in national leadership made it possible to adopt a national organizational strategy	Personal approaches by PKS strategist to senior leaders from 2003 underpinned the MOU for 2009; differences in opinion contributed to a split in the union
Membership density	Large unions much more likely to be approached than small unions	Engagement most feasible in Batam and Bekasi, where FSPMI is strongest	Engagement most feasible in Tangerang, long SPN's heartland
Organizational culture	Most unions lacked the kind of organizational culture required to roll out an effective political strategy	Proactive approach at grassroots; tight internal structures meant that national strategy also had a significant impact at the local level	MOU foundered because of weak links between the national and local levels within the union and relatively weak local-level structures
Organizational learning	Organizational strategies became more acceptable among the large mainstream unions over time	Lessons from 2009 informed future iterations of FSPMI's organizational strategy	Failure in 2009 saw SPN retreat from its organizational strategy

A Matter of Leadership: The Decision to Engage

The relationship between PKS and SPN began with a personal approach by party strategists and national-level union leaders. As early as 2003, Edi Zanur had developed a relationship with then-president, Rustam Aksam, and was holding monthly prayer meetings with the union's leadership. From Edi's perspective, it was "natural" in that context to begin a conversation about a more structured form of collaboration (Interview, May 2012). These discussions resulted in the placement of two of SPN's central committee members on the party's tickets for the national legislature in 2004. One of these candidates was Bambang Wirahyoso, who had replaced Rustam as the union's president in the previous year, when Rustam was elected founding president of KSPI.[12] It was Bambang who drove SPN's political strategy. Based on the union's experience of 2004, he decided that it made sense to approach the 2009 elections more systematically than had been the case in the previous electoral cycle (Interview with SPN president, May 2007). And he was not alone: according to one senior union official, at the time, "there was a general feeling that SPN needed to take the risk of becoming engaged in the system – the question was how" (Interview with SPN Banten branch head, May 2012). The national leadership agreed in 2006 to put a motion to change the constitution at the next congress in order to facilitate a formal memorandum of understanding (MOU) with PKS, which committed the party to accommodating union candidates on its tickets and the union to mobilizing its members in support of those candidates (Interview with SPN central committee member, June 2009). The proposal was controversial, as many members objected in principle to the politicization of the union or had other political affiliations – indeed it was voted down at its national congress in January 2009, three months before the legislative election[13] – but by that time, the MOU was in place.

While FSPMI was another obvious target for PKS, its first president, Thamrin Mossi, was firmly committed to the economic model of unionism. The central committee's attitude toward electoral politics shifted when Thamrin was replaced as president by secretary-general Said Iqbal at the federation's second congress in November 2006. There, the union passed a "political code of ethics" that allowed political participation while seeking to guarantee the maintenance of FSPMI's independence. Having considered three modes of engagement – forming a labor party, placing union cadres in political parties, and relying on lobbying – delegates decided that FSPMI would seek to place union cadres in a range of parties, and prosecute their campaigns through purpose-specific political vehicles or through its "strike force," Garda Metal (Interview with FSPMI

[12] SPN withdrew from the confederation in 2007 and rejoined it in 2014.

[13] The congress had been scheduled to take place in October 2008 but was delayed by Bambang in an attempt to avoid conflict, in part over the union's political strategy. SPN's secretary-general recalled several years later that the discussion was "very emotional" (Interview, March 2016).

president, June 2007).[14] The union also reinforced its position that cadres who held positions in the formal union structure could not run for office, but this restriction was relaxed at a leadership meeting in February 2009.

FSPMI's engagement with PKS at the national level also began with Edi Zanur, who reached out to the new leadership team in 2007 (Interview with PKS strategist, May 2012). In that year, other parties including PDIP and the National Mandate Party (*Partai Amanat Nasional*, PAN) offered to run FSPMI candidates in 2009, but PKS was "most intense" (*paling gencar*) in its approach (Interview with FSPMI president, June 2007). Impressed by the deal on offer – which included a competitive position on the ticket (*nomor jadi*) for two candidates for the national legislature, two candidates in provincial legislatures, and twelve candidates at the local level in various districts – FSPMI's central committee was keen to engage. But, unlike SPN, the union's leadership decided not to enter into a written agreement, concerned that it would give the appearance that the federation was beholden to the party (Interview with FSPMI president, June 2007).

Responding to pressure from branch offices, FSPMI also decided on a two-track strategy under which the national leadership focused on PKS while permitting local leaders to cut deals with other parties.[15] PKS was initially unhappy with this decision, but ultimately accepted it (Interview with FSPMI president, June 2008; Interview with PKS strategist, May 2012).[16] Ultimately, just four FSPMI candidates ran on PKS tickets – one at the national level, one at the provincial level, and two at the local level. A further twenty-three were endorsed to run at the district level, and one more at the provincial level, for parties as diverse as PDIP and the virtually unknown Republican Party (*Partai Republikan*), the largest concentrations representing the Democratic Nationhood Party (*Partai Demokrasi Kebangsaan*, PDK) in Bekasi municipality and surrounding areas and PPP in Batam, Karawang, and Purwakarta.[17] In short, while PKS and FSPMI had concluded an unwritten political contract, most candidates ran for other parties.

Membership Density: Leveraging Pockets of Opportunity

Only unions with a substantial membership base are of interest to political parties. SPN and FSPMI are both relatively large federations, with total

[14] Garda Metal, which was launched in 2006, is a highly trained corps of cadres whose tasks included shielding striking workers from security forces, accompanying FSPMI officials to negotiations at local manpower offices, and even assisting with natural disasters. As FSPMI's political strategy developed, Garda Metal's role extended to supporting candidates' electoral campaigns.

[15] This was in fact also the case with SPN, which accommodated local interests by allowing branches to collaborate with other parties (Interview with Banten provincial head, May 2012).

[16] This reading was confirmed in interviews with PKS officials in Jakarta and elsewhere.

[17] Data supplied to the authors. Several other FSPMI candidates ran without official endorsement.

memberships of 199,836 and 262,334, respectively.[18] But they have quite different geographic profiles across Indonesia's relatively small number of industrial areas. As Table 6.2 shows, FSPMI is heavily concentrated in West Java. However, it also has a strategic presence in the Riau Islands, where members account for a similar percentage of all manufacturing employment as in West Java. By contrast, SPN's dues-paying members are restricted to Java, although the union has small branches in a number of other locations including North Sumatra and the Riau Islands. Within Java, Banten is home to the largest number of SPN members, followed by West Java, where they are scattered across several districts and municipalities, while it has a similar number of members in East and Central Java.

While the union with the largest membership does not necessarily play the greatest role in determining the level of political engagement among workers, a given union must have a significant presence if it is to exert political influence. In SPN's case, the most active sites of political engagement at the time when the organizational strategy was in place were Tangerang district and Tangerang municipality.[19] Tangerang district has just over 2 million eligible voters. More than 600,000 manufacturing workers live and work in the district, where their neighbors include many of the 240,743 manufacturing workers employed in Tangerang municipality.[20] At the time of the 2009 election, SPN had some 43,000 members in Tangerang municipality and another 11,000 in Tangerang district (Interview with SPN Banten provincial head, May 2012).

The primary loci of FSPMI's political activities have been Batam and Bekasi, with a third hub in the district of Pasuruan in East Java. Batam and Bekasi are both notable for the size of their manufacturing workforce, and for the extent to which it is unionized. FSPMI has around 70,000 members in Bekasi district, where there are half a million manufacturing workers and around 2 million eligible voters. Its other stronghold is Batam where, as noted in Chapter 5, 77 percent of the workforce was employed by one or other of its 738 manufacturing plants in the mid-2000s (BPS Kota Batam 2006). While the proportion of workers employed in manufacturing has declined dramatically in the intervening years, the municipality is still home 150,000 or so manufacturing workers,

[18] In SPN's case, this figure represents a significant decrease from the 330,987 members recorded in 2015 (SPN 2015). FSPMI's membership had increased from 224,266 in 2013 (internal data provided to the authors).

[19] SPN's branches in Batam, Bekasi, Gresik, and Medan did not pursue the agreement (Interview with SPN deputy head for organizing and education, June 2012), though several SPN members stood for parliament for different parties in these districts (Interview with SPN vice president, March 2016; Interview with SPN Batam branch secretary, April 2010; Interview with SPN Medan branch treasurer, June 2013; Interview with SPN Gresik branch officials, March 2016). However, the Central Java branch played an active role in 2009 and again in 2014.

[20] The district does not have the greatest number of SPN members: that honor is held by Serang, also in Banten, where over 70,000 SPN members work at the Nikomas Gemilang factory.

TABLE 6.2. *Membership of FSPMI and SPN in selected provinces, 2018*

Province	Eligible Voters	Manufacturing Employment[a]	Manufacturing Workers as % of Eligible Voters[b]	Membership[c]		Field Sites Included
				FSPMI	SPN	
Banten	8,112,477	1,246,230	15%	18,576	110,880	Tangerang
West Java	33,270,845	1,242,743	4%	115,207	80,037	Bekasi
East Java	30,912,994	3,016,837	10%	23,752	21,136	Gresik
North Sumatra	9,785,753	608,918	6%	3,048	0	Deli Serdang
Riau Islands	1,229,424	191,572	16%	17,835	0	Batam

[a] Manufacturing employment figures are for 2017.

[b] These figures are a rough estimate, as some manufacturing workers may not be eligible to vote.

[c] Internal membership figures were provided to the authors at the company level (SPN) and the district or provincial level (FSPMI). Reliable figures for total union membership by province or district are not available.

Source: BPS Provinsi Banten (2018), BPS Provinsi Jawa Barat (2018), BPS Provinsi Jawa Timur (2018), BPS Provinsi Kepulauan Riau (2018), BPS Provinsi Sumatra Utara (2018), KPU (2018).

who constitute a substantial proportion of the 638,170 eligible voters in the municipality.[21] The manufacturing workforce is highly unionized, with over 10 percent of manufacturing workers belonging to FSPMI alone.

Organizational Culture: The 2009 Elections

Organizational culture – the way that unions operate as organizations and how they relate to their membership – is a key factor affecting the way that SPN and FSPMI have managed their engagement in electoral politics. In many ways, these unions are more similar than they are different, both having grown out of reformist impulses within the Suharto-era union and both having benefited from international support in the form of funding and technical assistance. But the two federations have developed quite different organizational cultures in the decades since. It is widely acknowledged that FSPMI has the strongest organizational culture among Indonesia's large unions, courtesy of its policy focus, its relatively well-educated and technologically savvy membership, its centralized dues structure and capacity for systematic data collection, and its internal training programs. By contrast, SPN has struggled to modernize in part because of the different nature of its membership base. In addition, its branch-dependent dues structure limited the national leadership's capacity to unify the organization behind its vision. Organizational culture also varies within unions, often with quite significant differences to be found between the national level, the branch level, and in individual workplaces. Differences in organizational culture at the branch level explain why SPN's Tangerang branches were so open to political engagement, and why it was FSPMI's Batam branch, rather than its Bekasi heartland, which led the charge in 2009.

One of the reasons that SPN's Tangerang branches leaped at the opportunity presented to them by the MOU with PKS was their participation in a voter education program for workers run by Solidarity Center (then the American Center for International Labor Solidarity) in the lead-up to the 2004 elections. As part of this program, some 130,000 members of SPN and two other unions (including FSPMI) received voter education, and union officials canvassed candidates' opinions on a range of labor issues and subsequently arranged Town Hall meetings where candidates could be quizzed by union members (Interview with Solidarity Center country director, September 2004). This program raised awareness of the potential benefits of having an organizational strategy and gave unionists the confidence to engage in the electoral process (Interviews with SPN officials, May and June 2012). When SPN's central committee issued an instruction to branches to honor the MOU, activists in the Tangerang municipality and district were among the branches that responded by identifying several possible candidates.

[21] Note, however, that many workers in Batam are migrants from other parts of Indonesia, who may still be registered to vote in their hometowns.

Despite this initial embrace of this political strategy, activists within the Tangerang branches ran into difficulties that quickly dampened their enthusiasm. PKS's national leadership had not yet circulated the MOU to its local branches and local party cadres, and they were surprised, even disconcerted, when union representatives approached them (Interview with PKS legislator for South Tangerang, May 2012). As an SPN candidate recalled:

> When I turned up at the PKS office, they weren't expecting me. I didn't want to beg, so told them to check with their central committee. They phoned and found out that I was right. They weren't too hostile, but of course they weren't impressed that an outsider was being given a place (Interview with SPN Tangerang district branch official, May 2012).

PKS's local officials then initiated a selection process for union candidates, who were subjected to the party's standard vetting procedure. In Tangerang district, the only candidate who passed the verification process was Saukani, the former district branch head. PKS gave Saukani Rp 30 million to help with campaigning expenses, and provided him with campaign tips (Interview, May 2012). But, although he was a self-described "PKS sympathizer," the party refused to run him in the district of his choice, instead placing him eighth of the eight candidates on the party ticket in another electoral district. Saukani took the campaign seriously, although he stopped short of "going all out." He focused his efforts on union members rather than trying to build a broad base. The pool of labor votes across the district shrank further when factories announced a three-day holiday for their workers. As a consequence, many union voters were absent on the day of the poll. Given the mismatch between his strategy and the demographics of the electoral district, it is not surprising that he received just 448 votes (KPU 2009a).

Of the candidates put forward in Tangerang municipality, only Pramuji, the head of the provincial branch, survived the vetting process. Since PKS needed more female candidates to meet the government's 30 percent quota,[22] it subsequently vetted another union official, Siti Istikharoh. The party decided that both candidates should run in the municipality's second electoral district, but Pramuji withdrew to ensure that the union vote was not split (Interview with SPN Banten branch provincial head, May 2012). Siti concentrated her campaigning on the estimated 85 percent of union members who did not have firm political allegiances, engaging directly with the union's workplace units. Based on these efforts, Siti garnered 726 votes, the fourth-highest number for a PKS candidate in a race where the party's first-named candidate received

[22] A gender quota was adopted in 2003, which required 30 percent of candidates put forward by a party to be female. The quota was not enforced in the 2004 elections, but was subsequently made compulsory under Law No. 10/2008 on General Elections. The law also required the implementation of a "zipper" system, in which a woman had to be included in every three places on the party list (Hillman 2017). The National Election Commission initially made little effort to monitor compliance (Shair-Rosenfield 2012). The quota was more strictly enforced in 2014.

just 2,075 votes (KPU 2009b). Siti's supporters, who served as scrutineers in the electoral district's polling stations, reported that she received some 4,000 votes – a total high enough for her to be elected. She believes vote-shifting occurred during the vote tabulation at the sub-district and district levels, where she did not have her own scrutineers (Interview, May 2012).[23]

FSPMI's Batam branch was also well-placed to participate in the legislative race of 2009. Unlike the Bekasi branch, which was resolutely apolitical until 2011, the Batam branch had years of political engagement in executive races behind it.[24] It also had Jas Metal, the political vehicle first established in the lead-up to the gubernatorial election of 2005. Having spent several months debating the relative merits of possible alliances, Jas Metal swung into action in 2006, mapping the residential concentrations of workers; identifying potential candidates and negotiating with political parties for places on party tickets; and campaigning among the membership for support (Jas Metal 2009). Some activists had a strong preference for an exclusive deal with PKS, which had wide appeal among members because of its religious orientation, but also because of its focus on policy and intensive mode of grassroots engagement, which echoed the union's own approach. Others favored a more inclusive strategy based on the assumption that members had established political preferences, and that these should be accommodated (Fieldwork observations in Batam, July 2007). By early 2007, Jas Metal had initiated discussions with a number of parties. Around this same time, FSPMI's central committee was finalizing its agreement with PKS.

As in Tangerang, there was considerable confusion within PKS's Batam branch about the deal. At the national level, party leaders had agreed that the union could decide on which of their members would stand (Interview with FSPMI president, April 2010). But PKS officials told Jas Metal activists that the party would decide which union candidates would be accommodated (Interviews with

[23] The reallocation of votes from one candidate to another is understandably a sensitive subject within parties. Sitting legislators interviewed in Tangerang agreed that illegal vote transfers were increasingly likely since the open-list system pits candidates within a party against each other (Interviews with PKS and PDIP legislators, May 2012).

[24] Members of other unions were also well-represented on local party lists in Batam. At the provincial level, a candidate from KSPSI ran for the Indonesian Employers and Workers Party (*Partai Pengusaha dan Pekerja Indonesia*, PPPI), one of a number of the so-called "worker parties" established in 1999. There were three candidates from KSBSI, two of whom ran for PBSD and a third ran for PAN (Interview with KSBSI Batam branch official, April 2010). The head of the local Farkes–Reformasi branch, who was at the time also the Batam representative of KSPI, stood as a candidate for PKS (Interview, April 2010). At the district level, a KSBSI candidate represented PBSD. He was joined by seven candidates from KSPSI, who ran for a number of different parties (Interview with KSPSI Batam branch secretary, April 2010). Several other unionists also ran without the official support of their organizations. For example, two senior SPN officials ran for the Concern for the Nation Party (*Partai Karya Peduli Bangsa*, PKPB) despite SPN's central-level pact with PKS (Interview with SPN Batam branch secretary, April 2010). For further details, see Ford (2014).

PKS officials, August 2013). Without consulting FSPMI's central committee, Jas Metal terminated discussions and struck a deal with PPP to run four unionists in labor-dense districts in Batam and another at the provincial level. In addition, Jas Metal endorsed two Golkar candidates and another for PAN in local races, and a PDS candidate in the provincial race (Jas Metal 2009). A number of other FSPMI members ran without Jas Metal endorsement at the provincial and municipal levels, including some for PKS (Interviews, April 2010).[25]

With support from FSPMI's national political strategist, Ridwan Monoarfa, Jas Metal built up a sophisticated plan of attack. It mapped FSPMI members' home addresses against the electoral districts and worked closely with workplace units in those districts to raise member awareness of the union's political strategy. It also collected campaign funds from branch members, raising Rp 100 million. Its most important innovation was, however, its decision to campaign on candidates' collective identity as unionists, sending the message to workers that they, as citizens, had the right to be represented by legislators who would put their interests first. This message was delivered on banners that presented FSPMI candidates from several parties as part of a single team (Interview with former Jas Metal head, June 2013). The banners attracted vehement protests from the candidates' respective parties but were welcomed even by union candidates with preexisting party allegiances because they allowed them to "fly the flag of the union rather than the flag of the party" (Interview with FSPMI deputy secretary, April 2010).

Ultimately, however, none of the Jas Metal candidates were elected – though Said Iqbal, who ran for PKS in the number two position on its national legislative assembly ticket for Kepri, came close, gaining the largest number of votes of any PKS candidate in Batam (at 22,865 votes, considerably more than the union's entire membership) and just 3,974 votes short of the number of votes cast for the only successful PKS candidate in the province as a whole (FSPMI 2009). Iqbal's campaign had been particularly affected by Edi Zanur's illness, which meant that he was unable to convince local party elites to fully support Iqbal in areas of the province where FSPMI did not have a presence (Interview with Edi Zanur, May 2012). He almost certainly also fell victim to vote-shifting between party candidates, which was common practice in the election.[26] Reflecting on his experience, Iqbal said he felt he had been "in an impossible position," having to compete not only with other parties, but with other PKS candidates who had the backing of the party (Interview with Said Iqbal, June 2009). Reflecting on FSPMI's failure to secure any seats in local races, strategists identified a range of external and internal factors, the

[25] For details, see Ford (2014).

[26] While PKS officials in Batam would not confirm that votes had been shifted from Iqbal to another PKS candidate, they acknowledged in more general terms that the branch had engaged in the practice of vote-shifting (Interview with PKS Batam branch officials, August 2013).

latter including Jas Metal's inability to prevent FSPMI candidates from running against each other in the same electoral districts and the fact that the truncated campaign had not allowed sufficient time for worker votes to be cultivated (Interviews, April 2010).

Despite these weaknesses, it was clear that FSPMI's Batam branch had achieved far more in its 2009 campaign than SPN had in Tangerang. SPN's efforts to support their candidates were at best haphazard, allocating campaign volunteers and gathering members to meet the candidates, but providing no systematic mapping of where union members lived, no political education, and no financial aid. By contrast – FSPMI's Batam branch, with the political education it provided to core activists, and its capacity to establish and run a dedicated campaigning organization – set the union on a political trajectory that continued for the next decade. In the words of one of the leading figures in Jas Metal, "Where workers are the majority, they should be governed by workers. Batam is a laboratory … Even though we failed, we have to keep trying until we find the right format" (Interview, June 2013).

Organizational Learning: Strategies for 2014

The political strategies adopted by SPN and FSPMI diverged even further in response to the unions' failure to secure seats in 2009. SPN's main lesson from its 2009 experiment was that electoral politics was futile. In 2010, it resolved not to pursue an organizational strategy in future legislative elections, leaving members to exercise their "personal political rights" without invoking their union identity. In practice, it proved impossible to separate union candidates from their identity within SPN, and the central committee released a recommendation in late 2013 advising local branches to support SPN candidates where one was running and to support other union candidates where there was none (Interview with SPN central committee, February 2014). However, Central Java was the only branch to take an organizational approach to the 2014 elections.

But while SPN decided to return to a more traditional stance of non-engagement, FSPMI ramped up its organizational commitment to securing worker representation in local legislatures. Based on the experience of its Batam branch in 2009, FSPMI's central committee decided to strengthen its organizational strategy, noting the need to do a better job of evaluating potential candidates, developing campaign strategies, and preventing multiple candidates running in the same electoral district (Interview with FSPMI president, April 2011). Importantly, they also no longer took it for granted that union members would vote for union candidates. The leadership shifted to a paradigm of "workers voting for workers" (*buruh pilih buruh*) and gave official candidates greater credence with the membership by issuing formal instructions endorsing their candidacies. It also decided to require FSPMI candidates to make a formal undertaking to follow the union line if elected or

risk expulsion from the union. As Iqbal explained, "Everyone has to understand that politics is just another tool to further the union's organizational interests" (Interview, February 2014).

This new approach was formalized at the 2011 congress, where delegates agreed that FSPMI would place their most promising candidates in a range of parties, a strategy that had evolved in the Batam branch over the course of the 2009 campaign. It also decided to create a series of political vehicles modeled on Jas Metal, which would have the authority to sign political contracts with different parties (FSPMI 2011). The union initially negotiated with Gerindra, Hanura, PAN, PDIP, and PKS in different regions (Interview with FSPMI president, June 2013). Ultimately, FSPMI candidates ran for ten of the twelve parties contesting legislative races in 2014 (Interview with FSPMI president, February 2014). Endorsed candidates were allocated a support team, including members from Garda Metal, and workplace units were required to organize meet-and-greets. As a way of generating campaign finances, the central committee ran large-scale fundraising events and issued an instruction that every member needed to make a one-of contribution of Rp 5000 to a war chest for the election.

Despite stronger support from the central leadership, the political strategy again played out primarily at the local level. In the case of the Batam branch, its inability to overcome the divisions over political strategy that had emerged in the 2011 mayoral campaign had dire consequences. Jas Metal struck a deal with Hanura, endorsing four candidates at the provincial level and two candidates in local races.[27] It also endorsed an additional two candidates – one for PKS and one for PAN – at the local level, while several other members of FSPMI again ran for different parties without Jas Metal endorsement (Interview with FSPMI Batam branch head, June 2013).[28] Riven with conflict over the split in political allegiances, the branch was in no position to throw its resources behind its candidates. None were elected, although one, Mustofa, came in third for PKS, just 120 votes behind the second successful PKS candidate for his district (KPU 2014) on the back of a well-executed individual campaign.[29]

But while the Batam branch floundered in 2014, its 2009 experiment laid the groundwork for the "all-out" strategy adopted by the Bekasi branch in 2014. This remarkable shift in the attitude of the Bekasi branch toward electoral

[27] Recall that Hanura's provincial head, Amir Hakim Siregar, had worked closely with elements within the FSPMI leadership since 2010.

[28] Other union candidates running in Batam in 2014 included two other KSPSI members, one of whom ran for Gerindra, and three candidates from KSBSI, two who ran for the Indonesian Justice and Unity Party (*Partai Keadilan dan Persatuan Indonesia*, PKPI), and a third for the National Democratic Party (Interviews with KSPSI and KSBSI candidates, June 2013 and October 2014).

[29] Mustofa spent some Rp 100 million on his campaign, mostly from his own savings. He even negotiated a five-year leave of absence from his company if elected. Having targeted the 1,400 FSPMI members who lived in his electoral district, he also arranged events for the general public and campaigned door to door (Interview with Jas Metal candidate, June 2013).

politics was prompted in large part by two local developments. The first was the branch's experience with Rieke Diah Pitaloka's 2013 gubernatorial campaign, in which branch activists, including the branch leader, Obon, had been heavily involved. The second was a political education program run by former PRD activists for FSPMI members in Bekasi between 2010 and 2013. As part of this program, branch members became exposed to *Omah Tani* (Farmers' House), a land rights organization run by another former PRD activist, which had done a deal with PDIP to include one of its members on the 2009 legislative ticket (Wibowo 2012).[30] Inspired by *Omah Tani*'s experience, the Bekasi branch set up its Workers' House (*Omah Buruh*) to provide workers a place to meet to share their experiences and build up solidarity both across workplaces and unions, and also to reach out to other parts of the community (FSPMI 2013b). After a delegation of representatives from *Omah Tani* visited Bekasi in June 2012, branch leaders began to plot their political strategy for the 2014 legislative race.

To avoid splitting the labor vote, the Bekasi branch decided to target electoral districts where they had the best chance of winning and run no more than one union-supported candidate in each district. In order to facilitate this, they undertook a mapping of their membership. Once this process was completed, they had to decide who would run in each of these districts. Initially, they had planned to poll members to determine the nominees, but this idea was abandoned for fear that it would create internal conflict (Interview with Obon Tabroni, March 2014). Instead, the leaderships of four of the federation's six sectoral unions were asked to put forward a name, taking into account criteria such as their popularity among members. Four of the federation's six affiliated unions were invited to identify candidates for the local races. Three FSPMI candidates secured nominations from major parties. Nurdin Muhidin ran for PAN in district 1, which was both his home district and the district richest in union members (Interview, March 2014). PAN also agreed to include Aji on the ballot in electoral district 3. Nyumarno, who had worked on Rieke's gubernatorial campaign and was a member of her staff, secured a spot on PDIP's ticket in electoral district 6. Finally, Suparno landed the number two position for PKPI in electoral district 2. The branch leadership also accepted PKPI's offer to accommodate Susanto, who was also a party cadre, in electoral district 5, where the union had not yet allocated a candidate. In addition, the national leadership identified candidates in electoral districts that encompassed Bekasi for the provincial and national legislative races. They chose two members of the central committee, Rustan and Iswan, who ran for PDIP on the provincial slate and for PKS on the national slate. Some unofficial FSPMI candidates also ran, but since the union was going all out for its official candidates, the union was confident that their members would understand which candidates had its support.

[30] After its candidate won a seat, *Omah Tani* continued its electoral activism, entering a political contract with the winning team in Batang's December 2011 district head race. Upon winning, the team provided farmers with land, increased access to education, and met with farmers every Friday in the town square to discuss their concerns (Mahsun 2017).

To inform members about the union's political strategy, the branch leadership held a series of consolidation meetings at an abandoned factory, which became the headquarters for the massive organizational effort needed for the campaign.[31] Each candidate assembled an official campaign team of fifteen members. These teams coordinated dozens of volunteers, who knocked on doors, distributed pamphlets and stickers, put up banners, and helped to organize candidate visits in communities in the electoral district. The branch also gave considerable thought to how it would deter fraud. With the open-list system, its main fear was that parties would reallocate votes from worker candidates to other candidates, as had occurred in 2009. Given the large number of polling places and party control over the selection of official witnesses, the branch leadership opted to focus on getting members certified by the Regional Electoral Commission as election observers (*pemantau*) and as members of the electoral oversight committee (*panwaslu*). These positions allowed them to collect evidence about vote tallies at a larger number of polling places and thereby enable them to counter fraud more effectively. In addition, election observers could report wrongdoing and members of the oversight committee could take action to prevent or sanction it (Interview with FSPMI Bekasi branch head, March 2014).

Although the results were not as strong as the Bekasi team had hoped, they nevertheless demonstrated that labor candidates could be elected given a sufficiently strong campaign. Two of the seven local-level candidates won seats. Nurdin received 10,981 votes, the third-highest number garnered by a candidate from any party, in an electoral district where PAN had never won a seat. With the accumulated party votes, he cleared the threshold.[32] Nyumarno faced two incumbents in what he called "the electoral district from hell" (*dapil neraka*), which was infamous for money politics (Interview, June 2015). His task was made harder by the fact that, while PDIP was strong in the electoral district allocated to him, it was home to a mere 2,500 FSPMI members (Interview, June 2015). To overcome these challenges, his team made a systematic plan for attracting voters from outside the union. He was also aided by Rieke, who was running on PDIP's national ticket in a district that included Bekasi. Rieke produced stickers that featured them together, alongside PDIP's provincial candidate, who was also from FSPMI. She also campaigned alongside him for two days and shared resources from her campaign team so that his team would have a complete set of tally sheets from individual polling stations. Nyumarno ultimately secured 6,092 votes, the second-largest number for a PDIP candidate in the electoral district. None of the other union candidates came close to

[31] For different interpretations of the significance of this campaign from two Indonesian academics who were directly involved in it, see Savirani (2016) and Tjandra (2017). Savirani (2016) also provides a detailed account of different candidates' campaigning strategies.

[32] Some voters cast votes for a party instead of an individual candidate, and these party votes "accumulate" to the party, which then allocates them to candidates.

winning a local race, but the candidates who ran in the provincial and national legislative races performed better than expected. Iswan won more than 27,000 votes, which leapfrogged him from the bottom position to win the third most votes for the party behind two prominent PKS cadres in the national race, and Rustan won over 24,000 votes in a much smaller provincial district, which placed him third in votes for PDIP and eighth overall.

Shifting Gears for 2019

Buoyed by the experience of 2014 and having learned a number of valuable lessons during Obon's 2017 campaign for district head, FSPMI's central leadership again committed to running institutionally backed union candidates in the 2019 legislative races. According to Iqbal, "the strategy for 2019 [was] much the same, just strengthened. We learned from 2009 and 2014" (Interview, February 2019). There were, however, two significant shifts made in response to changes in the broader political context. First, backing the losing presidential candidate in 2014 had exposed FSPMI to political backlash, so FSPMI strategists focused more energy on convincing the leadership of KSPI's other affiliates to take a more active role in the campaign. They succeeded in this effort, with ASPEK, Farkes-Reformasi, FSP KEP, and SPN committing to support candidates from the confederation and its affiliated federations. Although these other affiliates fielded a small minority of the 70 KSPI candidates who ultimately ran for office under the confederation's central strategy, their involvement was significant. Their participation both diminished the focus on FSPMI, defusing some of the tensions that had emerged within its ranks in 2014, and gave federation leaders a stronger reason to issue instructions to members to support all KSPI candidates, which helped overcome the problem of inter-union competition faced in previous elections.

Second, in contrast to 2014, when FSPMI strategists had rejected a targeted party approach, they sought to leverage their ongoing relationship with Prabowo to secure a better deal from Gerindra for KSPI candidates. As Table 6.3 shows, 87 percent of KSPI candidates stood for Gerindra or for one of its coalition partners. In districts where high-value candidates had a preexisting relationship with a party in Jokowi's coalition, KSPI tried to maintain coherence in those districts by identifying candidates from the same party or other parties in that coalition. In order to avoid putting out mixed messages, KSPI campaigned for Prabowo only in locations where KSPI candidates were standing for parties that supported him. In seats where KSPI candidates were running for parties in the coalition supporting Jokowi, their strategy was to remain silent on the presidential contest.

The dominance of Gerindra was evident in Bekasi, where seven of ten FSPMI candidates sponsored through the confederation ran for Gerindra: Obon (national legislature), Hendi Suhendi (provincial legislature), and five candidates in district races. These were joined by two PAN candidates,

TABLE 6.3. *KSPI candidates for the 2019 legislative election*

	Number of Candidates Standing			
	National Legislature	Provincial Legislatures	Local Legislatures	Key Regions
Parties supporting Prabowo				
Gerindra	4	9	23	Banten, Jakarta, West Java, East Java, North Sumatra
PKS	2	5	10	Banten, West Java, East Java, Riau Islands
PAN	0	0	7	West Java, Riau Islands
Berkarya	0	0	1	West Java
Parties supporting Jokowi				
PKB	0	1	3	West Java, Central Java, Riau Islands
Nasdem	1	0	2	Banten, West Java, Riau Islands
Perindo	1	0	1	West Java, Aceh

Source: Data processed from spreadsheet provided to the authors by KSPI.

one of whom was the incumbent Nurdin and one candidate for Berkarya.[33] The Bekasi campaign was significant not only because of its coherence in terms of candidate placement and the fact that other KSPI affiliates issued instructions to their members to support these FSPMI candidates, but also because it saw the development of an unprecedented level of inter-union collaboration. Obon struck a deal with the KSPSI's Metalworkers Federation candidate for the Regional Representative Council, Sidarta. In addition to displaying each other's banners outside their respective union offices, they both issued instructions to their members to support the other (Interview with KSPI Bekasi strategist, February 2019). This deal was given broader support when Abdullah, the head of KSPSI's Bekasi branch, announced that members should support Obon's candidacy (*Pojok Bekasi*, 2 April 2019). This move was highly significant, given Abdullah's ambivalence toward Obon's run for executive office in 2017.

Yet, despite extensive planning, only two candidates were elected through this central strategy – both of whom were from FSPMI.[34] The first was Obon,

[33] Nyumarno, the FSPMI cadre, who had run successfully as a PDIP candidate in 2014 and had a close relationship to Rieke, was endorsed by the local branch but not by FSPMI's central committee.

[34] A number of other candidates associated with FSPMI and other KSPI affiliates ran for office outside the central strategy. At least three FSPMI members who were not on KSPI's list of candidates were elected to local parliaments in Batam, West Java, and West Sulawesi with support only from local branches (Interview with FSPMI general secretary, May 2019).

who secured a seat in the National Legislature representing West Java's seventh electoral district, which includes Bekasi. Drawing on the strength of his previous run for district head, Obon won more votes than any other candidate in Bekasi district. The second was Mustofa, who won a seat in the local parliament in Batam on a PKS ticket, having built on his 2014 position by developing political education programs at the factory level (Interview, May 2019). At the time of writing, Gerindra had lodged complaints with the Constitutional Court on behalf of Baris and Suhendi, the other two FSPMI candidates running through the central strategy in Bekasi.[35]

CONCLUSION

Political parties reached out to unions in the context of the legislative elections because they recognized the potential power of a worker constituency in key industrial centers and believed that unions had the capacity to deliver the worker vote. Early on, with a closed-list proportional system in place, recruitment of union candidates was moreover a no-risk strategy since the votes they delivered flowed to party cadres. It was this promise of easy votes that prompted parties, large and small, to approach high-profile unionists and offer them a place on their tickets. Changes to an open-list system shortly before the 2009 elections altered this equation, raising the stakes for union candidates and the parties that recruited them. Parties that partnered with unions now had to be willing to let union candidates claim their seats if they could attract enough votes.

The payoff for unions of investing organizational resources in legislative contests were much less certain. Unlike executive races – where it is relatively easy to convince a non-union candidate to enter into a political contract and then use mobilizational power to hold them to account on key issues like minimum wages – running candidates for office even in local legislatures carries significant risks. In systems where candidates must have a party nomination, the absence of a long-term partisan ally that is programmatically committed to a labor agenda means that unions must enter into transactional alliances. And if a union-backed candidate fails, the union has no choice but to accept responsibility for its failure to get the vote out. Even where unions succeed in electing their cadres to legislative office, this strategy has serious limitations. First and foremost, union candidates are only likely to win in electoral districts where there is a large worker presence. As a consequence, union candidates will never be more than a minority within a local legislature, let alone its provincial

[35] Baris was running in the same electoral district as fellow FSPMI member, Nurdin, who had been elected under FSPMI's organizational strategy on a PAN ticket in 2014. FSPMI sought to increase their number of seats by running two candidates in the district where it had the most members, calculating that Nurdin could use the advantages of incumbency to retain his seat while Baris could rely primarily on union members for his votes. But this strategy backfired, and neither won a seat, likely because the labor vote was divided.

and national counterparts. FSPMI's 2014 campaign in Bekasi proved that it was possible to mobilize the worker vote to elect a union candidate in an industrial area. But the experience of those successful candidates in the years that followed confirmed the difficulties that they face in delivering on the labor agenda once in office. It is not that they necessarily have no impact – Nurdin exerted pressure on manpower officials to act in cases where companies failed to meet their legal obligations and drove a successful attempt to secure a local labor regulation – but one or two candidates cannot hope to make a great difference. Even if a larger number of union candidates were to be elected, the likelihood that they could exert any real influence in the legislature would remain small if they are spread across different parties.

Given that the likelihood of policy change is so small compared to street-based campaigns to influence national policy or local mobilizations to influence wage-setting, the risks of engagement loom large. Union leaders' decision to engage in the name of the organization can create divisions between them and their members, between national and local leaders, or even among the leadership at a particular level. At best, such divisions risk compromising the union's ability to implement its political strategy and have negative effects on organizational cohesiveness, which can spill over into other aspects of union work. At worst, differences of opinion over political strategy can tear a union asunder, as happened to SPN at its 2014 congress, when disagreements over the political strategy contributed to a split in the union and the subsequent formation of a rival union.

Why, then, did FSPMI continue with its organizational strategy, when the process is so difficult and rewards on offer so low? Institutional representation through the legislature offers the prospect of being able to shape public policy from the "inside" – a capacity that would complement the power to engage in street-based mobilization. Equally importantly, unions' legislative experiments have provided union strategists with valuable knowledge and experience about electoral processes and members with a glimpse of their collective potential as a political actor. To succeed, however, this strategy requires the cultivation of a working-class constituency in which workers identify electoral engagement as the means through which they should pursue collective interests. The question is, then, whether unions are in fact capable of developing that kind of worker constituency.

7

Building a Working-Class Constituency

Union engagement in electoral politics aims to give organized labor a voice not only in the tripartite institutions that deal specifically with labor issues but also in political institutions that determine policies affecting all Indonesians. Essential to extending union influence directly into the halls of power is the creation of a working-class constituency. A precondition for the formation of such a constituency is the development of a sense of collective identity among a substantial proportion of workers such that they not only conceive of themselves as having distinctive interests but also a recognition that union engagement in electoral politics is a valid and desirable means for pursuing these interests. The linking of identity, interests, and electoral politics does not emerge inexorably out of a shared class position or from a shared identity as workers. The formation of *politicized collective identities* in which workers are not only aware of their shared class-based interests but also the direct participation of unions in elections as the means through which to pursue these interests, is a political process, one in which unions can play a central role. Only forms of politicized working-class identity in which elections are understood to be a legitimate and productive path of union engagement will create a pool of willing voters that can be mobilized at the polls. Developing a working-class constituency is thus not only an organizational task but also an exercise in creating and politicizing a collective identity.

The previous chapters have outlined how Indonesia's unions have acted in the streets and in elections to advance a working-class agenda. But have these political engagements contributed to the formation of a working-class constituency in Indonesia? To better understand how workers are thinking about the electoral engagement of unions and the relationship between union membership and voting behavior, it is necessary to look more closely at how workers think about unions and politics, and at how unions succeeded – or failed – to

shape the behavior of working-class voters. Survey data in areas where unions have engaged in electoral contests provide a basis for making inferences about whether unions' involvement in elections has contributed to the formation of a collective working-class identity that could give unions more bargaining power with established parties or provide the electoral basis for a party of their own.

To better assess whether union engagement in elections is fostering the development of a working-class constituency, we conducted surveys in level-two electoral districts in three union-dense localities in which unions with a large membership base have been electorally engaged: Bekasi district (electoral districts 1 and 3), Tangerang district (electoral district 5), and Tangerang municipality (electoral district 2). Two surveys were conducted after the 2009 election cycle, and four after the 2014 electoral cycle. In each of the six surveys, we interviewed 200 workers. Of the 200 respondents in each survey, 100 were members of a major union that ran a candidate in the electoral district, 50 were members of other unions, and 50 were working-class voters who did not belong to a union.[1] This sampling allows us to assess whether there are differences between unionized and non-unionized workers and between workers whose unions are running candidates and those whose unions are not. In Tangerang municipality, we targeted SPN in 2009 because it had the most aggressive electoral strategy in that year. As SPN did not engage in the 2014 elections, we shifted our focus to KSPSI (Yorrys), which ran multiple local candidates in that year. In Tangerang district, we focused primarily on KSPSI (Andi Gani) because the head of the local branch ran for office (and won). In Bekasi, we targeted FSPMI in both 2009 and 2014.

We begin by analyzing some specific challenges that Indonesian unions face in cultivating a working-class constituency and then present evidence of workers' general views about issues and union engagement in electoral politics. We then evaluate the extent to which unions shaped the voting behavior of working-class voters in the 2009 and 2014 legislative races and the 2014 presidential election. We find evidence that there is a stable if not a growing proportion of workers

[1] Budget constraints limited our sample size, so we opted for an unbalanced sample that would allow us to better assess the impact of union engagement in politics on their members. Surveyors used snowballing methods in worker communities to reach the targeted number of respondents in each category, and we asked unions to help identify our initial contacts. Overall, about one-third of the respondents were women and two-thirds were men. Surveyors interviewed each respondent. The 2009 post-election survey (conducted in Tangerang municipality's electoral district 2 in late 2009 and in Bekasi district's electoral district 1 in early 2010) had eighty-nine questions focusing on various aspects of political identity, voting behavior, and knowledge about union candidates. Later rounds of the survey had ninety-four questions, most of which were drawn from the 2009 version. The second round was conducted in August 2014 in the same electoral districts as in 2009; the third round of survey took place in February and March 2015 in Bekasi district's electoral district 3 and Tangerang district's electoral district 5. A team based at the University of Indonesia administered the surveys in person, asking questions and recording informants' responses.

with politicized collective identities that make them amenable to supporting worker candidates. In legislative races, these politicized collective identities have not resulted in the formation of a working-class constituency but rather an organizational constituency rooted in the membership of one union, FSPMI. In the presidential race, however, we find stronger evidence that union engagement in politics has contributed to the formation of a working-class constituency that crosses organizational divides within the labor movement.

THE CHALLENGES OF DEVELOPING A WORKING-CLASS CONSTITUENCY

The formation of a working-class constituency is a profoundly political process that depends on transforming objective class interests into subjective political dispositions that translate into votes on election day. Institutions – in particular, political parties – play a central role in structuring class-based collective action in the electoral arena (Aminzade 1993, Przeworski and Sprague 1986). In Indonesia, the absence of a labor-based party is perhaps the decisive institutional feature that significantly limits possibilities for working class engagement in elections. This institutional feature, when combined with the fragmentation of the labor movement into many competing organizations, creates steep barriers to the formation of a working-class constituency. Unions frequently cooperate to achieve common policy goals, but this cooperation seldom extends into the electoral arena (Caraway and Ford 2017). The reason for this is that policies are typically public goods in that they are shared equally among members of all unions, so unions commonly set aside their rivalries to achieve these collective goals. By contrast, the absence of a unifying programmatic party that brings disparate unions together means that a victory for a labor candidate may not translate into meaningful policy outcomes. The Electoral office is, therefore, perceived to be a private good, as the benefits of office may accrue disproportionately to the winning candidate's union, or to the candidate himself or herself. In other words, the sense of collective identity forged across organizational divides during mobilization in the streets to achieve shared policy goals may not translate into votes at the ballot box for union candidates. The development of a working-class constituency in the context of a divided labor movement with no unifying party is, therefore, especially challenging.

In addition to these institutional features that hobble efforts to create a working-class constituency is the strong legacy of economic unionism (Ford 2005). Few unions have developed an electoral strategy in large part because of this legacy. Most unions use mass demonstrations to advance economic goals but are skeptical about the wisdom of unions engaging directly in electoral politics, and are, therefore, reluctant to endorse candidates. To the extent that these unions engage, they envision their proper role to be an outside pressure group that insulates the labor movement from the perfidies of party and electoral politics. These beliefs create doubts about the prudence of electoral

engagements that sap union resources and that potentially distract union leadership from the task of addressing members' everyday needs in the workplace. Workers who are wary of union involvement in electoral politics may identify as workers – that is, they may have a sense of collective identity, but not necessarily one that would translate into votes. In other words, laboring in a factory "does not naturally dispose workers to seek remedies for their grievances via electoral politics" (Aminzade 1993, 20). Unions who engage in electoral politics must convince workers who have these concerns that their workplace problems are connected to electoral politics and that addressing them required unions to mobilize working-class votes on election day.

Unions seeking to develop a working-class constituency must also meet the challenge of unsettling the voting habits of workers. At one end of the spectrum are voters who have strong partisan loyalties. Although partisan identity has weakened in Indonesia, between 15 and 20 percent of voters felt close to a particular party during the period covered by the surveys.[2] Among working-class voters in Bekasi and Tangerang, we found comparable levels of partisan loyalty. Seventeen percent of those who voted in 2014 chose the same party in the last three legislative elections, and 22.5 percent of respondents who voted in the 2009 and 2014 national legislative races were loyal to one party.[3] Another indicator of weak partisan identity is split-ticket voting. Indonesians commonly split their tickets in a single election cycle. In the 2014 elections, one in three of our respondents voted for the same party in local, provincial, and national legislative races.[4] Weak partisan attachment is helpful for unions running candidates, since it makes the task of convincing working-class voters to support a union candidate easier. But a sizable proportion of working-class voters are attached to a party. If union or pro-labor candidates are running for a different party – potentially one they dislike intensely – unions must persuade workers to set aside their partisan affinities.

At the other end of the spectrum are voters who respond primarily to short-term material rewards. Vote buying and patronage are pervasive in Indonesian elections, and studies that have assessed the relationship between these practices and electoral outcomes have concluded that deep pockets are a necessary if not sufficient condition for victory (Aspinall 2014b, Aspinall and As'ad 2015, Aspinall and Berenschot 2019, Aspinall et al. 2017). Transactional politics put unions at a disadvantage. Unlike promises about what labor

[2] Mujani and Liddle (2010) estimated about one in five voters in the 2009 election felt close to a party. By 2014, this proportion seems to have fallen to just one in six (Aspinall et al. 2017, 13). In a recent study, Muhtadi (2018) estimates that about 15 percent of Indonesians felt close to a party.

[3] These figures likely underestimate party loyalty because some respondents did not vote in more than one election.

[4] Of the 674 respondents who voted (84 percent turnout), 226 voted for the same party in the local, provincial, and national races. The most popular parties were Gerindra (54), PDIP (51), Golkar (28), PKS (26), and the Democrat Party (25).

candidates will do if elected, material benefits given to voters before election day are guaranteed. Unions do not have the resources to engage in transactional politics. Even if they did, playing that game would undermine the objective of creating a working-class constituency oriented to programmatic concerns.[5] Labor candidates must, therefore, convince working-class voters to change their calculus from one of short-term and guaranteed payoffs to one of medium-term to long-term lower-probability payoffs.

Finally, even if unions overcome the challenges outlined above and convince working-class voters to support union candidates, they face significant logistical challenges. On election day, workers need to show up at the polls and vote for the union candidates. While this point may seem obvious, the level of preparation involved to connect intent to cast a vote for the union candidate with actually doing so should not be underestimated. First, unions must ascertain where members vote, as they may work in one electoral district and vote in another.[6] Second, they must ensure that members are registered to vote where they live. If migrants comprise a large proportion of their membership, they may be registered to vote in their home towns or villages.[7] Third, Indonesian ballots are complex, with many parties and multiple candidates for each party. In order to win a seat in the open-list system, voters must remember both the name of the union candidate and his/her party when they enter the voting booth. Unions must engage in extensive outreach to ensure that they do. In the 2009 legislative race in Batam, FSPMI members reported that they were texting friends from the ballot box because they could not remember the candidate's name and party (Focus group discussion, June 2009). In the 2014 elections, working-class voters in the surveyed districts in Bekasi had to remember three different candidate-party pairs in order to vote for the Go Politics slate. In electoral district 1, for example, voters had to remember that Nurdin was running for PAN in the local race, Rustan was running for PDIP in the provincial race, and Iswan for PKS in the national race. Aware of this challenge, Nurdin asked for position 8 on PAN's ticket because PAN was the eighth party on the ballot. Voters could find him on the ballot by remembering 8-8 (Interview, March 2014).

[5] FSPMI was well aware of this challenge. The Go Politics campaign denounced "money politics" and discouraged members from accepting money for their votes. When we conducted our survey in August 2014, many respondents eschewed the nominal payment that we provided for participation, voicing concerns that it was a form of money politics. Union cadres also protested that the payment undermined their work in persuading members not to accept money for their votes. For a discussion of how different union candidates handled this issue, see Savirani (2016).

[6] Unions typically did not have such fine-tuned data about their membership and made educated guesses about where their members lived. Only FSPMI in Bekasi invested substantial resources in mapping their membership.

[7] In the 2009 elections, there were widely reported problems with voter registration. In our survey locations, only Tangerang municipality in 2009 had a high number of respondents who reported not voting because they were not registered.

Creating a working-class constituency, then, requires unions to engage in deep organizing among their members and in working-class communities. Unions must bridge organizational divides, dislodge or weaken the influence of economic unionism, and convince those who doubt the utility of electoral politics in general to show up at the polls. They must convince working-class voters to abandon partisan loyalties and vote based on programmatic interests tied to their class identity. And, having done this, they must collect better membership data so as to select districts where they have a strong base, and ensure that willing voters can locate the correct legislative candidate on a huge ballot on which labor candidates may be running for different parties. Given the multi-faceted nature of these challenges and the amount of intense grassroots engagement required to overcome them, a simple analysis of electoral results is too crude a measure of the extent to which unions have laid important groundwork for creating a working-class constituency. To assess this requires that we look more carefully at individual-level behavior and beliefs.

WORKERS' VIEWS

A precondition for developing a working-class constituency is that working-class voters' predominant concerns connect to issues advanced by labor candidates and the parties they run for. If working-class voters care more about religion or corruption than about worker rights or minimum wages, the distinctive appeal of labor candidates will be less apparent. But, even if workers prioritize concerns that stem from their working-class status, they might not believe that unions should be involved in addressing them through the electoral process. In this section, we utilize our data to ascertain whether workers' identify laborist issues as their main concerns and to better understand how workers think about union engagement in electoral politics.

In order to get a better sense of the issues of most importance to working-class Indonesians, we asked respondents about their voting priorities.[8] In 2009, the three most popular responses were healthcare, education, and worker rights. The fourth and fifth most popular responses in this round of the survey were religious identity and minimum wages. In 2014, healthcare, worker rights, and minimum wages were the strongest responses, followed by employment-based insurance and education. The issues that were important to respondents did not vary depending on their union status, and there was substantial overlap in the issues of concern to workers in 2009 and 2014. Healthcare and worker rights were in the top three, and education and minimum wages in the top five, in both years. Some of these issues are very much

[8] We offered respondents ten choices and asked them to rank-order three: quality education, healthcare, religion, unemployment, raising minimum wages, social security, outsourcing, women's rights, worker rights, and eradicating corruption.

laborist issues (minimum wages and worker rights), but others such as health and education are not specific to the working class. They are, however, classic welfare-state issues advanced by social-democratic parties in other contexts and address vital social concerns that disproportionately affect Indonesia's low-income voters, who do not have the financial resources to obtain quality alternatives on the private market. Many unions recognized the salience of healthcare for working-class voters, as demonstrated by their advocacy for universal healthcare after the 2009 election. Overall, workers ranked concerns connected to their class location more highly than issues such as religion and corruption that are not. Candidates and parties pledging to represent these interests might be able to tap into a working-class constituency if they address these programmatic concerns.

But to what extent are workers amenable to unions taking on these concerns in the electoral arena? Among those who supported union involvement in politics, many observed that workers needed direct representation to promote worker-friendly policies. For example, one respondent stated: "Labor policies are tied to politics. Workers shouldn't just be spectators; they should be involved in politics, too." Some respondents identified specific issues, such as minimum wages, while others focused more generally on ending exploitation and defending workers' rights. Numerous respondents also felt that protests were losing their effectiveness: "If we have representatives in the legislature who really fight for workers we won't need to protest anymore." By contrast, those who objected to political unionism did not connect union engagement in electoral politics to the fight for workers' interests and rights. Many of these respondents considered politics and labor issues to be distinct realms of activity: "Unions are organizations that focus on labor issues not politics." Most of these responses reflected views consistent with economic unionism in regarding a union's primary role to be focused on workplace-centered advocacy. Politics, in this view, is a distraction from this primary task: "If unions do both they won't do their job."

Despite these mixed feelings among respondents, our data show a solid basis of support for a more politically engaged form of unionism – although that support varies across jurisdictions and categories of respondents. Figures 7.1 and 7.2 present descriptive data that gauge working-class support for union engagement in politics in 2009 and 2014 in the four electoral districts surveyed. The support for union engagement in politics was strong for all categories of respondents in Bekasi and Tangerang in 2009. Surprisingly, however, it was stronger in Bekasi, where FSPMI did not engage in the elections, than in Tangerang municipality, where SPN did. In 2014, a narrow majority of unionized workers in Tangerang municipality believed that unions should engage in electoral politics, but this support fell substantially among non-unionized respondents. In Tangerang district, the support for union engagement in politics was more modest, even among unionized workers. Fewer than 50 percent of KSPSI members, whose local leader was running for office, thought that unions should be engaged in politics. In Bekasi 1, the overall support for union

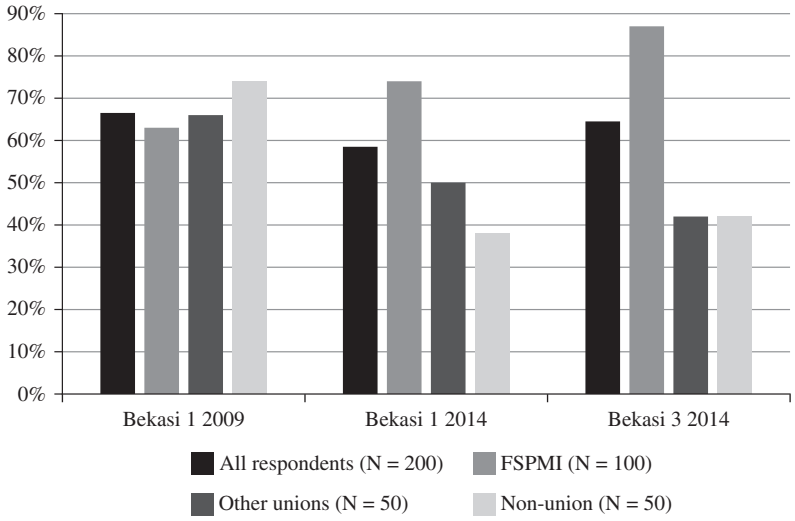

FIGURE 7.1. Unions should engage in politics: Bekasi.

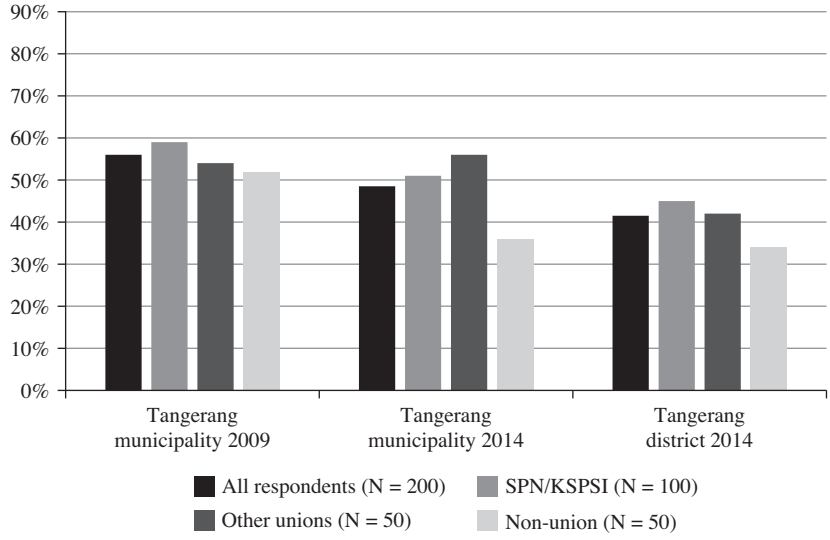

FIGURE 7.2. Unions should engage in politics: Tangerang.

participation in politics declined in 2014, only because support plummeted among non-FSPMI unionists and non-unionized workers. FSPMI members in Bekasi 1 became much more in favor of union involvement in politics. This pattern of strong support among FSPMI members and weaker support from other categories of respondents is repeated in Bekasi 3, where FSPMI members' endorsement of union engagement in politics is more than double that of other respondents. FSPMI's Go Politics campaign thus seems to have had a tremendous positive impact on its membership, but may have generated some backlash among other working-class voters.[9]

Despite this mixed evidence about workers 'support for union engagement in electoral politics, over 74 percent of unionized respondents considered it to be acceptable if their leaders ran for executive or legislative office.[10] How do we square the high levels of support for union candidates with the weaker support for union engagement in politics? Respondents who indicated that they opposed union cadres running for legislative office objected for reasons similar to those they articulated in opposing union engagement in politics. But apparently many respondents who opposed union engagement in politics did not equate a union leader running for office with union engagement in politics. The reason for this may be that they distinguish between an individual exercising their constitutional right to run for elected office from an organizational commitment to politics.

Given this ambiguity about the status of union candidates, support for the formation of a labor party may be a stronger indicator of worker support for union engagement in electoral politics. Although early efforts to form a labor party in Indonesia failed, some key union leaders became convinced of the need to establish a political party that would truly represent the interests of labor. This is so, says Said Iqbal, because "existing parties just swallow our activists up" (Interview, February 2014). Even Andi Gani, the PDIP cadre, believed that workers had no business "entrusting their fate" (*titip nasib*) with anything other than a labor party (Interview, June 2015).[11] But our data reveal that working-class voters are less enthusiastic about the formation of a

[9] KSPSI members likely turned against electoral engagement in 2014 due to their local rivalry with FSPMI. The large drop among non-unionized workers is more puzzling. It may be due to increased labor strife in the years before the election, or greater cynicism and apathy toward electoral politics in general.

[10] Support among union members in the "targeted" union was in most cases a little higher.

[11] After we completed our surveys, the major union confederations publicly announced their intention to move toward the formation of a joint labor party (*Tribun*, 23 April 2015), but they parted ways leaving KSPI to proceed alone in its attempts to have a political vehicle in place for the 2019 election (Interview with KSPI president, September 2014). Having registered a presence in twenty-three provinces and some 175 municipalities and districts, it failed to meet requirements for registration at the national level, a step required before it could run in the election. KSPI then entered negotiations with a number of parties that had an established legal identity but had no prospect of competing in the election (Interview with KSPI president, October 2016). When this strategy also failed, KSPI's political strategists resigned themselves to again working with existing parties in 2019.

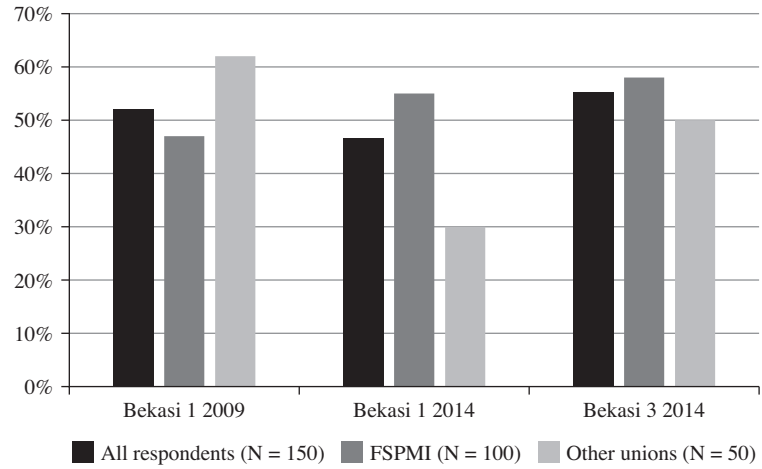

FIGURE 7.3. Support for the formation of a labor party in Bekasi district (unionized voters).

labor party than the top leadership. While a substantial proportion of unionized workers believe that unions should form a labor party, levels of support are lower than for union engagement in politics. The support was lowest in Tangerang district in 2014, at 45 percent, and over time, there is no substantial change in Tangerang municipality, where it sat at 48 percent in 2009 and 45 percent in 2014. It was highest in Bekasi 3 in 2014, where 55 percent of unionized respondents supported the formation of a labor party. In Bekasi, we once again find a backlash pattern: FSPMI members were more enthusiastic than members of other unions about a labor party formation. In Bekasi 1, the support grew among FSPMI members, from 47 to 55 percent; but support among other unions in Bekasi 1 plummeted from 62 percent in 2009 to 30 percent in 2014. In Bekasi 3, support was stronger across the board, with half of members of other unions and 58 percent of FSPMI members agreeing with the formation of a labor party (Figures 7.3 and 7.4).

Respondents who supported the formation of a labor party stressed that a labor party would fight for workers' interests and rights by channeling their aspirations more effectively than existing parties. As one noted, "A labor party would be different from the other parties because unions will be able to pursue their own program focused on workers' rights." Some respondents also highlighted the role a labor party could play in unifying unions behind a cause: "If we had a labor party, all unions would be united in improving our welfare." Those who objected voiced similar concerns as those who believed that unions should stay out of politics – they thought that unions should concentrate on workers and that having a union was enough. Some respondents argued that there were already too many parties and it would be better to work with existing parties because adding another party would just make things more confusing.

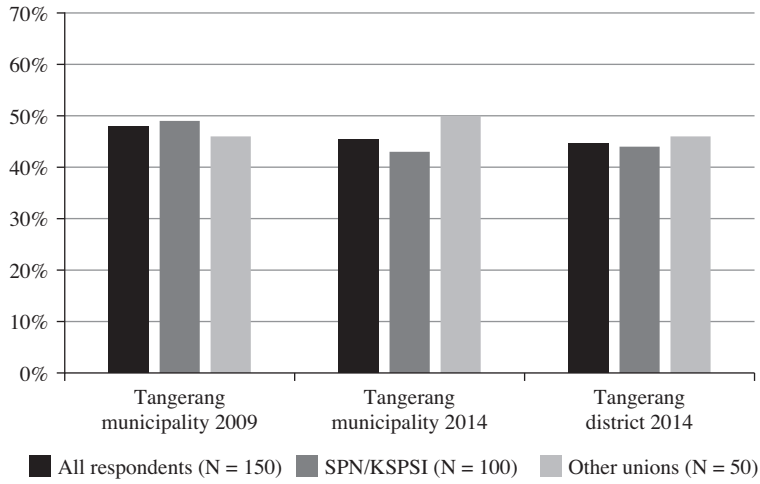

FIGURE 7.4. Support for the formation of a labor party in Tangerang (unionized voters).

Overall, then, support for union engagement in politics is substantial. While a majority of union members do not believe a labor party is necessary, a substantial proportion of them do, which is impressive given that unions have not yet engaged in much political education on this issue.[12] While there is a solid base of workers who are open to forming a labor party and to union participation in electoral politics, trends over time show a strengthening of a politicized working-class base only among FSPMI members in Bekasi. In other words, there is not a steady or consistent increase in support as a result of the electoral engagement of unions, and evidence in Bekasi suggests that there may be a backlash effect of FSPMI's Go Politics campaign among members of other unions. In the next section, we shift our focus from the beliefs of workers to their knowledge about union candidates and voting behavior in the 2009 and 2014 elections.

Mobilizing the Vote for Worker Candidates

A substantial proportion of workers seems to be open to union engagement in politics, which indicates that there is a potential voter base for unions to tap. But these claims of abstract support do not necessarily translate into the

[12] Within KSPI, there was a long-standing debate about the relative merits of attempting to form a labor party. In 2007, FSPMI's leadership was in agreement that the union should be involved in politics, but had decided it was premature to attempt to form a party, something they believed could be appropriate in 10–15 years' time (Interview with FSPMI president, June 2007). Burned by its experience with Muchtar Pakpahan's Labor Party, KSBSI was unenthusiastic about a labor party (Interview with KSBSI president, February 2015), and it was not until 2015 that KSPSI's leadership accepted the necessity of forming a labor party (Interview with KSPSI president, June 2015).

TABLE 7.1. *Worker candidates in legislative races, 2009 and 2014*

		Local Candidates	Provincial Candidates	National Candidates
Bekasi District 1	2009	Mirati – FSPMI/ PKPI	Basso – SPN/ PKS	—
	2014	Nurdin – FSPMI/ PAN	Rustan – FSPMI/PDIP	Iswan – FSPMI/ PKS Ferri – KSPSI/ Gerindra
Bekasi District 3	2014	Aji – FSPMI/ PAN	Rustan – FSPMI/PDIP	Iswan – FSPMI/ PKS Ferri – KSPSI/ Gerindra
Tangerang Municipality 2	2009	Siti – SPN/PKS	—	—
	2014	Asep – KSPSI (Y)/Golkar Hartono – KSPSI (Y)/Nasdem Ponco – KSPSI (Y)/Nasdem	—	Djoko – SPN/ PBB Marinus – KSPSI (Y)/PDIP
Tangerang District 5	2014	Ahmad – KSPSI (AG)/PDIP	Riden – FSPMI/PKS	Djoko – SPN/ PBB Marinus – KSPSI (Y)/PDIP

mobilization of these respondents at the polls for labor candidates. Did labor candidates succeed in mobilizing these voters at the polls in legislative elections? As Table 7.1 shows, union candidates in the surveyed electoral districts ran for a variety of parties.

Mobilizing votes required that candidates inform working-class voters about their candidacies and then persuade workers to vote for them. How well did labor candidates do in accomplishing this task? In Tangerang, we find that unions did not mobilize voters effectively and that awareness of labor candidates actually diminished between 2009 and 2014. In Bekasi, by contrast, FSPMI made great strides in voter mobilization, although this success was confined largely to its own membership.

Tangerang

In Tangerang municipality and district, a number of labor candidates ran for office in 2009 and 2014. As we saw in Chapter 6, SPN's Siti Istikharoh ran for the local legislature in Tangerang municipality in 2009. In 2014, three KSPSI (Yorrys) cadres ran in the same district for local seats. In addition to these local candidates, Marinus from KSPSI (Yorrys) and Djoko from SPN ran

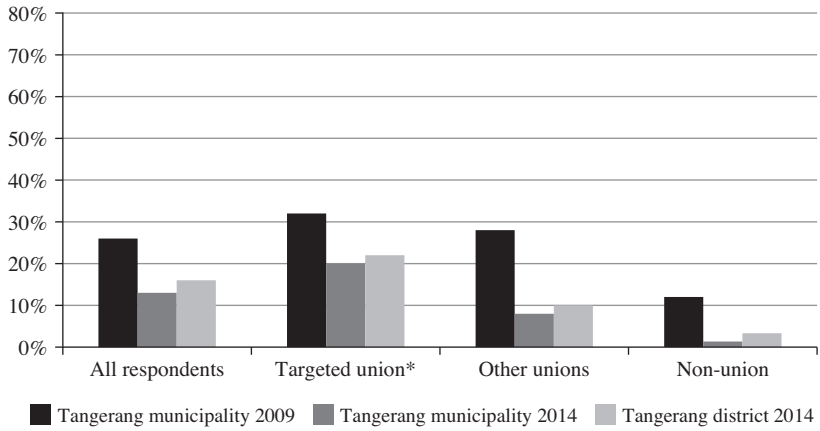

FIGURE 7.5. Awareness of union candidates in Tangerang (percentage of respondents). * In 2009, the targeted union was SPN. In 2014, the targeted union was KSPSI (Yorrys) in Tangerang district and KSPSI (Andi Gani) in Tangerang municipality.

for national office in both surveyed districts in 2014. These eight candidates appeared on the tickets of five different parties. Although far more candidates ran for office in 2014 than in 2009, awareness about the existence of labor candidates was higher in 2009 (26 percent) than in 2014 (13 percent). In Tangerang district, despite having four labor candidates running from four different unions, only 16 percent of respondents knew there was a labor candidate, even though one of the candidates, Ahmad Supriyadi, was the local leader of KSPSI (Andi Gani), which was the largest confederation in the district (Figure 7.5).

The comparatively high levels of awareness in 2009 show that SPN's electoral strategy did make a difference, at least with respect to educating working-class voters about the existence of a labor candidate. The absence of a national strategy among both factions of KSPSI is reflected in the comparatively low levels of awareness among working-class voters in 2014. Deep divisions in the branch offices of both factions on whether the union should be running candidates hampered efforts to reach out to its members. Still, only having union cadres running for office made a difference, as members of these unions had higher levels of awareness than other unionized and non-unionized workers.

SPN may have done better in reaching members of other unions and non-unionized workers in 2009 than any union did in 2014. But this greater awareness of labor candidates was shallow, as fewer than ten respondents could remember the name of a candidate, so voters might not have located the candidate on the ballot on election day.[13] In 2014, only 13 percent of

[13] Although low name recollection may be a consequence of holding the survey some months after the election, as we will see below, few respondents voted for labor candidates in 2009, so it is not merely an issue of forgetting their names.

respondents in Tangerang municipality could recall the name of any candidate. Only two respondents recalled Riden, FSPMI's candidate for the provincial legislature. But, perhaps most surprisingly, only fourteen respondents in Tangerang district identified Ahmad Supriyadi, who was elected. This shows that candidates from a labor background who win office do not necessarily ride to victory by tapping into a working-class constituency. Our survey confirms his claim that he did not win votes by politicizing a collective class identity (Interview, February 2014). In 2009, he had run in another electoral district and decided that he could not count on working-class votes to win; instead of mobilizing his union, he chose instead to target long-term residents and become a party cadre so that he could get a higher place on the ticket in 2014.

In Tangerang, then, more respondents remembered the names of candidates in 2014 than in 2009, but general awareness about the existence of union candidates was lower in 2014 than in 2009. Importantly, however, awareness may not – and did not – translate into many votes on election day. In 2009, only about one in five respondents who knew there was a union candidate voted for a union candidate. In 2014, those who knew about union candidates were more likely to vote for them – about one in two in Tangerang municipality and one in four in Tangerang district. But, given the low levels of awareness, this translated into a tiny number of votes on election day. In short, unions in Tangerang had not managed to cultivate a working-class constituency in legislative races – awareness of union candidates did not improve over time, and the number of working-class voters who punched their ballots for labor candidates remained small.

Bekasi

In Bekasi, there were also numerous union cadres running for office. In 2009, Mirati and Basso ran for local and national legislative seats in Bekasi 1, and in 2014, FSPMI ran candidates for local, provincial, and national office in both surveyed districts. In addition, Ferri, a prominent KSPSI (Andi Gani) leader based in Karawang, was a candidate for the national legislature in both surveyed electoral districts. These seven candidates ran for five different parties.

Whereas in Tangerang, we found minimal evidence for improvement over time in voter mobilization, in Bekasi, our survey provides strong evidence that deliberate efforts in the electoral arena pay off. The change in FSPMI's strategy in Bekasi between 2009 and 2014 had important effects on working-class voters. In 2009, only 17 percent of respondents in Bekasi 1 were aware that union candidates were running for office, and only a few respondents could remember the name of a candidate. In 2014, a majority of respondents in Bekasi 1 and over 40 percent of respondents in Bekasi 3 knew there was a labor candidate running for office. Even more impressive, 52 percent of respondents identified Nurdin by name in electoral district 1 and 34 percent identified Aji in electoral district 3.

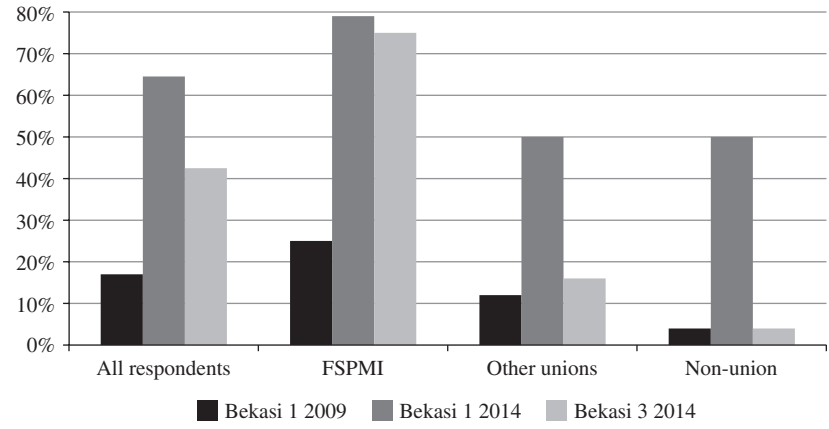

FIGURE 7.6. Awareness of union candidates in Bekasi (percentage of respondents).

FSPMI members were also far more aware of the existence of union candidates than members of other unions, which provides evidence of both the effectiveness and the limits of the Go Politics campaign (Figure 7.6). Among FSPMI members, 69 percent recalled that Nurdin was a candidate and 68 percent remembered Aji's name. The union was less successful in informing other working-class voters about their candidates, but Nurdin's campaign in Bekasi 1 made considerable inroads. Almost half of members of other unions and half of non-unionized voters knew there was a union candidate. Thirty percent of respondents who belonged to other unions and 30 percent of non-unionized respondents also recalled Nurdin's name. By contrast, in Bekasi 3, very few non-FSPMI informants knew there was a union candidate, and not a single respondent who was not a member of FSPMI remembered Aji. Name recognition was negligible for other candidates in Bekasi. Fewer than 3 percent of respondents recalled Ferry, a KSPSI leader running for national office. Name recognition was also low for FSPMI candidates running for higher-level offices – only nine respondents identified Iswan by name and only eight named Rustan, and all of these respondents were in Bekasi 1. The candidates running for the local seats were well-known branch activists, so the stronger name recognition for them is not surprising. Members were less familiar with the provincial and national candidates.

Working-class voters were not only more aware of FSPMI's candidates in 2014, but there was also a higher vote yield. Whereas in 2009, only about one in four respondents who knew there was a union candidate voted for one, in 2014, this proportion increased to almost one in two in Bekasi 1 and more than four in five in Bekasi 3. Over half of FSPMI's members claimed to have voted for a union candidate. In Bekasi 1, more than one in five members of other unions also voted for a union candidate. An analysis of the parties that FSPMI members chose in each race also suggests that the provincial and

national candidates, Rustan and Iswan, had a higher vote yield than indicated by their low name recognition. Recall that the Go Politics slate in both surveyed districts had FSPMI candidates running for three different parties – PAN in the local races, PDIP in the provincial race, and PKS in the national race. If FSPMI members voted for PDIP and PKS in these higher-level races, some of them were probably voting for Rustan and Iswan, even if they did not recollect their names. To assess whether FSPMI members split their vote in line with the Go Politics slate, we looked more carefully at the data for the ninety-five of the 200 FSPMI respondents who voted for PAN in the local legislative race.[14] We then break these ninety-five respondents into different categories based on how they voted in local, provincial, and national races. Since these parties have distinct social bases, if FSPMI respondents split their ticket to vote for parties that correspond to the Go Politics slate, then the most likely explanation for this unusual voting behavior is that the union influenced their votes, even if respondents could not remember union candidates' names. PDIP has a strong nationalist orientation, PKS is Islamist, and PAN has Islamic roots but is not an Islamist party. Voters with a strong partisan attachment to PDIP would be averse to voting for PKS but open to voting for PAN; conversely, strong supporters of PKS would be averse to voting for PDIP but more amenable to voting for PAN.

As Table 7.2 shows, the respondents who voted for the party running an FSPMI candidate in all three races (Go Politics) constitute by far the largest category. The second category (Local Loyal) includes respondents who voted for PAN in the local race but did not vote for PAN or for any other party that was running an FSPMI candidate in other races. The third largest category (Rieke Effect) captures FSPMI members who voted for PAN in the local race but for PDIP in the national race. As a pro-labor legislator with a strong network in Bekasi from her 2012 gubernatorial candidacy, Rieke may have pulled pro-labor votes away from Iswan in the national race, and attracted votes for the provincial candidate, Rustan, who was also running for PDIP.[15] Rieke campaigned with Rustan as well as with another Go Politics candidate on PDIP's local slate, Nyumarno. The remaining categories

[14] We assume that most of those who voted for PAN, which did not poll strongly in these two electoral districts, did so because there was a union candidate running for PAN. In electoral district 1, PAN polled eighth in the local legislative race in 2009. In electoral district 3, it fared better, winning the fifth-largest number of votes.

[15] There is some ambiguity about whether we should classify these voters as Rieke Effect or Local Loyal. On the one hand, these respondents voted the Go Politics slate at the local and provincial level but deviated at the national level and voted for PDIP instead of PKS. This interpretation, which we have used for coding purposes, suggests that an affinity for Rieke led them to deviate from the Go Politics slate. Another equally valid interpretation is that these are PDIP partisans who were Local Loyal, that is, they voted for PDIP at the provincial and national level but abandoned their partisan affinity in the local race to support the union candidate. Given their loyalty to PDIP, they are also likely PKS averse.

TABLE 7.2. *Split ticket voting by FSPMI members (PAN), 2014*

Category	Respondents
Go Politics (PAN-PDIP-PKS)	30
Local Loyal (PAN-X[a]-X, PAN-PKS-PAN, PAN-PKS-X)	18
Rieke Effect (PAN-PAN-PDIP, PAN-PDIP-PDIP, PAN-X-PDIP)	16
PKS averse (PAN-PDIP-PAN, PAN-PDIP-X)	12
PAN partisans (PAN-PAN-PAN)	7
PDI–P averse (PAN-PKS-PKS, PAN-X-PKS)	5
Confused levels (PAN-PKS-PDIP)	4
Lean PAN (PAN-PAN-X, PAN-X-PAN)	3
TOTAL	95

[a] X indicates a party other than PAN, PKS, or PDIP.

capture partisanship. PAN partisans are those who voted only for PAN. The PKS-averse category includes those who voted for PAN and PDIP at the local and provincial levels but did not vote for PKS or PDIP in the national race. PDIP averse includes those who voted for PAN in the local race and PKS in the national race but did not vote for PDIP in the provincial race. The four respondents who voted for PKS in the provincial race and PDIP in the national race likely confused Iswan and Rustan. The final category (Lean PAN) includes the three respondents who voted for PAN in two races and another party in the third race.

These more finely tuned data show that Go Politics shaped the voting behavior of FSPMI members more deeply than is indicated by the name recognition data. While only one-sixth of FSPMI respondents voted the full Go Politics slate, about another third split their ticket in a way that suggests the union partially influenced their votes.[16] Given the complexities of the ballot and navigating the slate, as well as the other challenges in persuading members to vote labor, it is no small achievement that FSPMI convinced a large proportion – almost half – of its members who voted to vote at least in part based on their union identity.

In short, our survey data provide strong evidence that FSPMI's Go Politics strategy not only increased awareness among working-class voters about union candidates, but also persuaded a substantial subset of them – primarily FSPMI members – to vote for labor candidates. Moreover, FSPMI made great strides among its members. Compared to 2009, a far larger proportion of respondents were aware of union candidates, and the majority of those

[16] We exclude PAN partisans since respondents who strongly identified with PAN would have voted PAN regardless of whether a union candidate was running.

who were aware of them voted for them. The main problem for FSPMI is that it was less successful in reaching out to and persuading non-unionized workers and members of other unions, and knowledge of – and votes for – provincial and national candidates was much lower than that of local candidates. Nevertheless, FSPMI's efforts in the 2014 legislative elections showed that it could effectively mobilize its members' votes, and this mobilizational capacity did not go unnoticed by candidates in the presidential race, which began to heat up after April's legislative election concluded.

THE 2014 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

After the conclusion of the legislative elections, Indonesia's political parties lined up behind two presidential candidates, Prabowo Subianto and Joko Widodo. While 2014 was not the first time that unions had been courted in a presidential race, that year marked an important turning point. Not only did unions engage more actively in the election, but both candidates also made appeals to workers, and one concluded a ten-point political contract with a major national confederation. In this section, we analyze how the major confederations positioned themselves in the presidential race and then utilize our survey data to take a closer look at working-class voting patterns in Bekasi and Tangerang to assess how effectively unions mobilized their members on behalf of presidential candidates. We find strong evidence that candidate strategies and union engagement shaped the voting behavior of a subset of working-class voters.

Engaging in Presidential Elections

In 2009, national unions had not attempted to mobilize their members in presidential elections, and none of the major confederations signed a political contract with any of the candidates. Representatives from several unions, including FSPMI, SPN, KSBSI, and key sectoral unions within KSPSI met with Soesilo Bambang Yudhoyono, but these discussions did not yield a political contract (Interview with SPN president, June 2009). Both teams challenging the incumbent also reached out to unions, but no deals were made.[17] But, while unions had remained neutral in 2009, the three main confederations

[17] Juliawan (2014, 26–27) cites a statement by LBH Jakarta to the effect that one union endorsed Soesilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Boediono, two supported Jusuf Kalla and Wiranto, and nineteen supported Megawati and Prabowo. However, our interview data suggest that LBH Jakarta appears to have been misinformed. Some local leaders in West Java from FSPMI, SPN, and KSPSI did sign an agreement with Megawati, and her running mate, Prabowo, without authorization of their national leadership in exchange for promises to make May Day a national holiday, eliminate outsourcing, end the cheap wage policy, improve social security provisions for workers, establish a workers' bank, and end the privatization of state-owned enterprises. FSPMI's leadership took its signatories to task for their role in the debacle (Interview with FSPMI Bekasi branch officials, May 2011).

took an active interest in the 2014 contest between Jokowi and Prabowo. By this time, unions had amassed extensive experience at the local level, and their recent policy accomplishments emboldened them. However, national unions did not coordinate; they divided their loyalties instead.

The leadership of two major confederations and one large national federation publicly supported Jokowi's candidacy. KSBSI president, Mudhofir, came out strongly against Prabowo on the grounds that his members did not want to be led by a president with a record of human rights violations (Interview with Mudhofir, February 2015). KSPSI's Andi Gani also supported Jokowi, which was no surprise, given his links to PDIP and the chance that he would become Minister of Manpower in a Jokowi government, where he would have significant influence over labor policy (Interview with Andi Gani, June 2015).[18] Likewise, the president of SPN publicly declared his support for Jokowi (Interview with SPN central committee member, May 2015). However, Jokowi refused to sign a political contract with SPN or either of the confederations and instead committed on 2014 May Day to what he described as the "Three Entitlements of Working People" (*Trilayak Rakyat Pekerja*), namely decent work, decent wages, and a decent life. The unions supporting Jokowi participated in an initiative called Worker Volunteers for Jokowi (*Relawan Buruh Sahabat Jokowi*, RBSJ), but did not formally instruct their members to vote for Jokowi, or to take other measures to support his campaign.[19] The leader of the other KSPSI faction, Yorrys, also supported Jokowi, but formed an alternative group because he did not want to work with Andi Gani (Interview with KSPSI branch leader, May 2015).

The only large confederation to support Prabowo was KSPI. Like Andi Gani and Mudhofir, KSPI's president, Said Iqbal, had publicly supported Jokowi's gubernatorial candidacy in 2012. But Iqbal and Jokowi had parted ways in late 2013 over the provincial wage negotiations, when Jokowi failed to deliver on promises of further larger wage increases for 2014. After Prabowo agreed to sign the political contract, Iqbal declared the confederation's support for his candidacy at the 2014 May Day event in Jakarta's Bung Karno Stadium described in Chapter 1. KSPI's constituent

[18] KSPI claims that other factions within KSPSI supported Prabowo (KSPI 2014) but our interviews and press coverage suggest that Yorrys supported Jokowi and faced party sanctions because of this (Trianita 2014). Since Jokowi's election, Yorrys has publicly supported the president.

[19] RBSJ was formed on 2 April 2014 in Jakarta. By June 2014, it claimed to have bases in twenty-eight provinces across Indonesia, which were mobilized in support of Jokowi's campaign (Suparman 2014). KSPSI informants say that most of the pro-Jokowi volunteers in industrial areas were from KSPSI. Andi Gani brokered an agreement with KSPSI branch leaders who, in turn, explained the agreement to their members and formed volunteer teams in Jakarta and in other labor-dense regions across Indonesia, including several locations in Java and Sumatra (Interview with KSPSI central committee member, May 2015).

federations were consulted before the political contract with Prabowo was signed and retained the freedom to decide whether or not they would act on it, a process considered sufficiently robust by federation leaders (Interviews, 2014 and 2015).[20]

Mobilizing the Vote

Whether unions could deliver on their pledge to mobilize votes to their members in the 2014 presidential election depended primarily on the extent to which their branches acted on the declarations made by the national leadership. In this task, the unions backing Prabowo were far more effective than those backing Jokowi. One reason for this was the political contract, which served as a powerful mobilizing tool. Another factor was organizational commitment. The endorsement by KSPI was the result of a formal decision taken by its governing body. By contrast, the confederation leaders backing Jokowi were hesitant to throw their organization's weight into the race. They declared their personal support for him but such declarations, even by the head of a union, do not carry the same weight as an organizational decision or a formal instruction ordering members and cadres to act. Members were told that it was their "democratic right" not to participate in RBSJ (KSPSI 2014), and a common refrain from union cadres was that members should vote with their conscience.

Consequently, responses were quite varied among the pro-Jokowi unions. Branch officials in some unions noted disaffection within the membership about the decision to support Jokowi, which, in some cases, resulted in a branch actively campaigning for Prabowo (Interviews with union officials, 2014 and 2015). More common was apathy or a divided leadership – the consequence of both was inaction. In Batam, KSBSI, KSPSI, and SPN engaged only superficially with the election (Interviews with Lomenik Batam Head, KSPSI Batam branch head, and SPN Batam secretary, October 2014). KSPSI's North Sumatra branch refused to endorse either candidate, but other pro-Jokowi unions participated in RBSJ and encouraged members to vote for him (Interview with KSPSI provincial head, October 2014). In Tangerang district, only KSPSI's branch, which was led by the newly elected PDIP cadre, Ahmad Supriyadi, actively campaigned for Jokowi (Interviews with KSPSI Tangerang district branch head and SPN central committee member, May 2015). KSPSI Gresik branch responded enthusiastically to Andi Gani's call to action, encouraging members at the workplace unit

[20] Local officials we interviewed accepted that there had been a legitimate national process in the lead-up to deciding to support Prabowo, even where branches had a close working relationship with PDIP. Defending his support of Prabowo, Iqbal claimed that among the presidential contenders, only Prabowo had expressed any real interest in engaging with the unions (Interviews, February 2014 and September 2014).

level to vote for Jokowi (Interview, KSPSI Gresik official, June 2015). There was no union presence, however, when Jokowi made an unannounced visit (*blusukan*) at the Gresik market on 29 June 2014 (Khairany 2014). In other cases, union cadres went through the motions in their official capacities, but behind the scenes supported Prabowo (Interview with KSPSI leader in West Java, June 2015).

Within KSPI, there were also mixed feelings about both the decision to endorse a candidate and the fact that the candidate concerned was Prabowo. A number of the federations were bound by constitutional provisions concerning political neutrality. This group included FSP KEP, which at the national level most strongly opposed political involvement (Interview with FSP KEP president, October 2016), as well as Farkes-Reformasi and ASPEK (Interviews with Farkes-Reformasi president and ASPEK general secretary, October 2016). But some local branches deviated from this apolitical stance – FSP KEP's leader in Gresik campaigned openly for Prabowo (Interview with FSP KEP Gresik branch head, June 2015), as did the Central Java branch of ASPEK (Raharjo and Dwi 2014). Other affiliates made a gesture toward the contract but did not dedicate significant resources to mobilizing their members. For example, officials from FSP ISI reported that "We didn't feel like we had been cornered, or that we were being forced to act. We just told the membership that they should vote for Prabowo and asked them not to make a fuss if they supported Jokowi" (Interview with FSP ISI officials, October 2016).

The heavy lifting among the pro-Prabowo unions was done by FSPMI, whose central committee issued an instruction to the leadership to campaign for Prabowo and for the membership to vote for him. Iqbal traveled to branches to keep them on task, and the national board was involved in planning some high profile events in support of Prabowo, which included a long march from Bandung to Jakarta and mass meetings in Banten, Surabaya, and Bekasi (FSPMI 2014, Neonnub 2014). Initially, there was considerable wariness in some branches, but this lessened after the political contract was signed. Still, orders from the top did not always translate into enthusiastic action. In Batam, for example, the branch leadership was split in their allegiances and grassroots sentiment favored Jokowi; consequently, while FSPMI's social media feeds were dominated by pro-Prabowo messaging, campaigning was at best "passive" (Interview with FSPMI Batam branch officials, October 2014). There was also ambivalence in North Sumatra and greater Surabaya, where some union cadres were closely linked to PDIP and were thus inclined to support Jokowi. But organizational discipline trumped personal feelings, and most cadres fell in line and campaigned for Prabowo (Interviews with FSPMI North Sumatra provincial head, October 2014 and FSPMI East Java provincial secretary, June 2015). In Banten, leaders foregrounded the political contract rather than the candidate, which helped to overcome the resistance of Jokowi supporters there (Interview with FSPMI Banten provincial head, May 2015).

In Bekasi, enthusiasm for Jokowi waned after the political contract was signed, and most cadres who were individually supportive of Jokowi put the organization before their personal views (Interview with FSPMI cadres, June 2015).[21] Building on the momentum from the 2014 legislative races in which two local cadres were elected, the branch subsequently went all-out for Prabowo. They organized large meetings and invited Iqbal to make the case directly to workers. A long march from Bandung to Jakarta passed through Bekasi, providing an opportunity to further socialize Prabowo's candidacy to members. Factory unit leaders also discussed the contract's benefits for workers at their regular meetings. Shortly before the election, Prabowo broke the fast with an estimated 10,000 workers in an industrial suburb of Bekasi (*BeritaSatu*, 7 July 2014).[22]

To what extent did these different patterns of mobilization affect how members voted? Our surveys can provide some insight into how well national unions swayed their membership. Prabowo won handily in all four districts (see first column) but support among unionized respondents exceeded Prabowo's overall level of support in these districts, in some cases by double digits (Table 7.3). In Bekasi, all categories of respondents strongly favored Prabowo, but support was highest among FSPMI respondents, who voted for Prabowo at rates far higher than members of other unions and the population at large. The repurposing of the Go Politics machinery for the presidential election in Bekasi was very effective, as can be seen by the high proportion of members who voted for him. In Tangerang district, the support for Prabowo is only slightly stronger among our respondents than reflected in the electoral returns, but some interesting patterns emerge if we drill deeper into the data. KSPSI respondents showed stronger support for Prabowo than union members in general and non-unionized respondents, which is precisely the opposite of what we would expect if the union was influencing the voting behavior of its members. In Tangerang municipality, the support for Prabowo from members of other unions and non-unionized workers was much weaker, which may reflect the weaker presence of FSPMI there. KSPSI's backing of Jokowi appears to have had little effect on the membership, who voted overwhelmingly for Prabowo and at higher rates than the general population. Across the board, then, members of the targeted union in all four electoral districts supported Prabowo at higher rates than members of other unions, and the

[21] Another factor in Bekasi was that the head of the employer association, Sofjan Wanandi – referred to as the "father of low wages" (*bapak upah murah*) by FSPMI – was a strong supporter of Jokowi and became an adviser on labor issues for the campaign (*Koran Perdjoeangan*, 30 May 2014; *BeritaSatu*, 30 June 2014). He was deeply unpopular in Bekasi because he masterminded Apindo's court challenge to the 2012 minimum wage (Interview with Obon Tabroni, June 2015).

[22] Prabowo bankrolled this event and also paid for printing costs for campaign materials (Confidential interview, June 2015).

TABLE 7.3. *Prabowo's share of the vote in the 2014 presidential race*

	District (%)	All Respondents (%)	Unionized Respondents (%)	Targeted Union (%)	Other Unions (%)	Non-unionized Respondents (%)
Bekasi District 1	66	74	79	86	64	61
Bekasi District 3	57	78	81	85	72	69
Tangerang Municipality 2	57	59	62	66	53	49
Tangerang District 5	61	62	62	64	58	61

differences are large, which suggests that members of unions that had cadres running for office voted differently from those that did not.[23]

In order to better understand why voters chose their candidate, we also asked respondents to rank-order their top three reasons for selecting their candidate.[24] The strongest response was the candidates' character (*kepribadian*), with 561 respondents selecting this as one of their top three reasons. This finding corresponds with other studies that have identified the rising importance of personal characteristics (i.e. not partisanship), in Indonesian elections (Aspinall 2014b, Mujani and Liddle 2010, Mujani, Liddle, and Ambardi 2018). After character, the candidate's program or undertakings was the second most popular response, selected by 463 respondents, and his or her background was third, selected by 292 respondents. In fourth place, with 246 responses, was union encouragement to vote for the candidate. It is difficult to disentangle the union effect and the program effect because Prabowo's promises to workers were the product of a contract he signed with unions. Although the union's influence placed fourth in overall importance, this effect is stronger than it seems since one-quarter of the respondents did not belong to a union and many unions did not back a candidate. It is clear, however, that the vast majority of respondents who indicated that the union influenced their vote (almost 70 percent) were in Bekasi, and 70 percent of these respondents were FSPMI members, once again demonstrating the impact of the Go Politics machine.

The presidential election thus provides suggestive – but not definitive – evidence that candidates for executive office can win working-class votes by making programmatic commitments to them. FSPMI and labor activists who supported Prabowo had a signed political contract to share with voters, while those supporting Jokowi only had vague promises to peddle. In Tangerang, members of both KSPSI factions also disproportionately supported Prabowo

[23] Mujani et al.'s (2018) analysis of the 2014 presidential race found several factors that shaped voter behavior. Non-Muslims were more likely to vote for Jokowi and religious Muslims were more likely to support Prabowo. Javanese voters also leaned toward Jokowi, while outer-island voters favored Prabowo. More educated voters also were more likely to vote for Prabowo, and voters who were strongly identified with a candidate's party were also more likely to vote for that candidate. Given our sample, we do not think these factors can explain the pattern that we find in these data. Working-class voters are not highly educated, and in terms of religion and geographic background, should not be sharply different from other voters in their electoral districts. Gerindra and PDIP loyalists – which we assess by whether they voted a straight ticket in the 2014 legislative election – were evenly represented in the 2014 survey, with fifty-four respondents voting for Gerindra and fifty-one voting for PDIP in the local, provincial, and national races.

[24] The possible responses were: my spouse chose this candidate, a member of my family supported this candidate, the candidate has an economic/political/family background that represents constituents' interests, my union supported the candidate, the candidate's character, the candidate's party, the candidate's campaign promises/program, the candidate's religion, the candidate's service to my community, the candidate gave me a gift, and the candidate funded facilities in my neighborhood.

even though their national leadership supported Jokowi. In Bekasi, Prabowo's commitments combined with the Go Politics machinery to produce extremely high levels of support for him among FSPMI members. The presidential election thus suggests that Prabowo's political contract paid off and provides evidence of the value-added of combining such commitments with the organizing muscle of a highly mobilized union. Just as Rieke had tapped into a working-class constituency that crossed organizational divides in 2012, so, too, did Prabowo in 2014. In the context of a divided labor movement without a unifying labor party, then, executive races seem to be more amenable to transforming a politicized collective identity into a working-class constituency than each union running and backing their own legislative candidates.

In the end, of course, Prabowo lost in a tightly fought race. Said Iqbal, president of FSPMI and KSPI, was nevertheless proud of labor's accomplishments in the 2014 presidential contest. Despite Prabowo's loss, he considered FSPMI's electoral mobilization in 2014 to be a positive sign of how far the labor movement had come since the fall of Suharto:

> We can't be like we were in the New Order. We can't be apolitical. I am proud that we could get a presidential candidate to openly support a labor agenda … We also proved that we could deliver. Prabowo won in all the FSPMI strongholds except Batam and Surabaya – even in Bekasi, which is famously pro-PDIP. Gerindra couldn't have brought Prabowo home in Bekasi, but FSPMI could. This gave us confidence that workers could be really influential if we could consolidate their votes (Interview with FSPMI president, February 2015).

In sum, we find evidence that union engagement and programmatic commitments by Prabowo shaped working-class voting behavior among workers in our targeted unions, and especially among FSPMI members, in 2014. In Tangerang, where FSPMI's membership is much smaller, the impact on the vote was more modest than in Bekasi. KSPSI's members in Tangerang also voted disproportionately for Prabowo and did so despite the support of the national leadership and some local cadres for Jokowi. This evidence suggests that these members were to some extent persuaded by Prabowo's public commitments to support working-class issues.

CONCLUSION

Has the political engagement of Indonesia's unions helped to foster a politicized collective identity in the country's major industrial zones? The evidence in this chapter paints a complex picture that not only echoes Aminzade's (1993) finding that working-class electoral mobilization varies across time and space within a single polity, but also highlights the importance of organizational affiliations and union strategy.

In both Bekasi and Tangerang, workers prioritized issues tied to their class position, and a substantial proportion of them supported union engagement

in electoral politics and the formation of a labor party. But the dispositions of working-class voters toward electoral engagement by unions varied both across electoral districts and across categories of respondents. In Tangerang, awareness of union candidates fell between 2009 and 2014, and as a result, only a negligible number of respondents voted for them. In Bekasi, it was only FSPMI members who became increasingly committed to union engagement in electoral politics. Non-unionized workers and those belonging to other unions became warier of electoral engagement over time. They were less supportive of union engagement in politics and of forming a labor party, despite being better informed about the existence of labor candidates. So, while the organizing muscle of Go Politics resulted in a greater awareness of union candidates in Bekasi in 2014 than in the previous election cycle, this awareness only reached beyond organizational lines in Bekasi 1. Moreover, only a small proportion of those non-FSPMI members who were aware of union candidates voted for them.

As FSPMI's Go Politics campaign demonstrates, unions that invest resources can politicize the collective identities of workers and mobilize votes for labor candidates in a relatively short period of time. But building a working-class constituency requires unions to reach beyond their organizational divides to forge a politicized collective identity that is not limited to the boundaries of a single organization. In legislative races, unions have not yet accomplished this task. In Bekasi 1, only twenty-one respondents who were not FSPMI members voted for a union candidate in 2014, and fewer than half of these voted for parties that corresponded to the Go Politics slate.[25] FSPMI's impressive legislative efforts have not yet fostered a broader working-class constituency; instead, they have fostered an organizational constituency. The mobilizing mantra of Go Politics – workers electing workers – would be more accurately described as FSPMI members electing FSPMI cadres. This accomplishment should not, however, be dismissed. In 2009 and 2014 elections, union candidates had assumed that their members would vote for them, but only a few did. Mobilizing member votes took deliberate effort and a significant investment of union resources. FSPMI's Go Politics campaign demonstrates that it is possible for unions to mobilize their membership at the polls and to elect worker candidates – a notable achievement in Indonesia's transactional polity.

[25] We did not count respondents who voted a straight party ticket as voting for FSPMI candidates. For example, if they voted for PKS in local, provincial, and national races, we did not count them as supporting Iswan's candidacy for PKS.

8

Conclusion

Despite its organizational weakness, the labor movement has become a central actor in Indonesia's fledgling democracy. In barely two decades, it not only secured a series of pro-labor policies through lobbying and street-based protests but also inserted itself into the political arena. There, it has been wooed by governors and presidential aspirants and fielded candidates in legislative elections. As we have shown, these achievements were not driven by workplace power or by institutional links to a labor or social democratic party. Rather, they were made possible by street-based mobilizations and autonomous electoral engagement in a political system that remained geared toward the interests of the country's economic and political elite.

Indonesia's labor movement followed this unusual pathway because authoritarian legacies foreclosed other paths. Organized labor was all but destroyed when Suharto's New Order took control in the mid-1960s – and, although pockets of labor activism had re-emerged in the 1990s, the right to establish an independent union was not formally reinstated until 1998. Although it quickly rebuilt its organizational structures, the labor movement struggled with authoritarian legacies. Unions were small, weak in the workplace, profoundly allergic to electoral engagement, and lacking party allies. Unable to compensate for deficits in these classic measures of organizational power, they initially took to Jakarta's streets as a means to influence the labor reform process. With time, however, the legacy of apolitical unionism became less influential. Some unions recognized that by not engaging in electoral politics, they were missing another means through which to shape labor policies. When direct elections for local executives began in mid-2005, unions seized this new opportunity to cut deals with aspiring candidates of a variety of political persuasions. After trying their hand at these local executive races, some unions set their sights higher and sought to run union cadres for elected office. Without their own party vehicle, however, the only way forward was

to run union-sponsored candidates on the slates of non-labor parties. Wary of tying their fate to a single party, labor candidates competed under multiple party banners.

These tactics proved to be surprisingly successful in securing policies favorable to labor. At the national level, unions leveraged their geographic concentration around the capital to stave off assaults on pro-worker legislation and promote pro-worker reform. These protests forced weak presidents to withdraw anti-labor decrees and peeled away legislative support for labor laws that unions opposed. They became increasingly sophisticated in their approach to national policy engagement – culminating in the social security campaign of 2010–11. In this campaign, unions worked together in collaboration with legislators, labor NGOs, and other civil society organizations to secure the implementation of universal social security through a combination of mass protest, lobbying, and legal challenges. It was these national-level advances that brought union leaders into dialogue with legislators, ministers, and even presidents, and ultimately prompted first Prabowo and then Jokowi to woo organized labor as part of their presidential electoral campaigns.

Progress was much slower at the local level, where unionists had to make greater adjustments to take advantage of new structures of authority and new industrial relations institutions. Over time, however, local union leaders found ways to collaborate across organizational lines on the wage councils, generating alternative data to support their arguments for greater increases and mounting protests to pressure government representatives to side with workers. But it was only after the introduction of direct executive elections at the gubernatorial and the mayoral/district head levels that union strategists had the opportunity to supplement the resource-intensive tactic of mass mobilization by cutting deals with candidates. It was this strategy – which combined mobilization on the street and at the ballot box – that underpinned unions' capacity to achieve remarkable increases in minimum wage levels in 2012 and 2013.

Participation in legislative races was a logical next step in the labor movement's increasingly sophisticated strategy of electoral engagement, but it did not pay off in the way that involvement in local executive races had done. Unions had put aside their differences and worked together at the local level to support executive candidates willing to enter into a political contract to deliver pro-worker measures. Not all were elected, and not all of those who were elected followed through. But this strategy nevertheless delivered concrete advances on the labor agenda. By contrast, few union candidates secured legislative office. Unions failed even in union-dense districts where there was sufficient membership to carry candidates to victory. Whereas unions had cooperated effectively in the policy arena and in races for local executives, they seldom worked across organizational lines in legislative races – and without such cooperation, the labor vote was divided. Unions who ran

candidates also lacked experience and ran into difficulties enforcing organizational discipline in their selection and in translating members' loyalty into votes at the ballot box.

Given the poor performance in legislative races, the primary benefit of attempts to secure elections for union-backed candidates lay less in the possibility of an election, and more in creating a more politicized working-class identity among union members. While a consolidated working-class constituency remained elusive, some unions influenced voting patterns among their members. Where unions had a strong base and invested sufficient resources, they succeeded in convincing their members not only that union candidates *should* stand for office but also that they should punch their ballots for those candidates. It is also clear that these advances were the result of incremental refinement of unions' political strategies as they learned from their victories but also their mistakes.

BACKLASH

Indonesia's labor movement had accomplished far more than observers expected between 1998 and 2014. These gains were possible because union leaders, local and national, embraced the opportunities offered to them by changes in the country's political and industrial relations institutions. But this success invited a backlash at the national level. One factor that had favored unions' efforts to insert themselves into policy debates in this period was the openness, or vulnerability, of successive presidents to their demands. This was to change with the election of Joko Widodo to the presidency in 2014.

Jokowi may have run on a pro-people, pro-social movement platform, but he oversaw the development of policies that were far more anti-labor than those of any of his predecessors. Surrounded by influential businessmen including Vice President Jusuf Kalla and Employers' Association chair, Sofjan Wanandi, his first term in office proved to be the bleakest unions had experienced since the fall of Suharto. Indeed, such was the dissonance between his undertakings and his actions that even unions in the pro-Jokowi camp recognized that he was no friend of labor:

> There was lots of hope for Jokowi if you listened to what he said when he was running. But once he was elected his actions have directly contradicted this image. There's no doubt now that he's on the side of capital (Interview with FSBKU officials, June 2017).

The first element of Jokowi's strategy was to attempt to domesticate the labor movement. After the election, he rewarded Andi Gani and Mudhofir for their support during the presidential campaign with well-remunerated positions on boards of state-owned enterprises. Although both undertook to continue to act independently (Interview with KSBSI president, February 2015; Interview

with KSPSI president, June 2015), their new roles made it hard for them to criticize the government's policies. As a consequence, KSPI was left very much on its own. As the president of Farkes-Reformasi observed:

> KSPI is now a single fighter. We fight alongside the other confederations on issues that affect unions, but their level of commitment is different. We used to fight shoulder to shoulder. But now Andi Gani is a commissioner, and that limits his ability to fight. Mudhofir is in the same position (Interview, October 2016).[1]

This assessment was confirmed by the leaders of one KSBSI-affiliated federation, "We don't need to respond to government policy – that's KSPI's job" (Interview with Garteks leaders, September 2018).

Jokowi's administration also worked systematically to reduce the political space available to the labor movement by returning to Suharto-era tactics for controlling labor. According to Iqbal, this was markedly different from the one taken by Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono over the previous decade:

> He used a combination of the welfare approach and the security approach. We were monitored by the state intelligence agency, but our permits were issued. Also, attacks on us were perpetrated by gangsters (*preman*) paid by companies, and not by the police. The new government uses the security approach. Every time we protest – even on May Day – we are called in by the police. We are intimidated before the fact. They use subtle instructions, not direct ones, like Suharto. But it's the same thing (Interview, June 2015).[2]

An important element of this "security approach" was a return to the criminalization of unionists for participating in demonstrations. For example, twenty-three workers and a number of NGO activists and students were arrested and tried for protesting outside the presidential palace in October 2015 (*SINDOnews*, 28 March 2016). Other measures were put in place to reduce unions' capacity to leverage its geographical concentration in Greater Jakarta to pressure national policy-makers. Governor Ahok issued a short-lived regulation limiting demonstrations in the city to just three locations in October 2015.[3] The regulation also banned convoys and the use of megaphones at over 60 dB and required demonstrators to coordinate with the army as well as the police (Firdaus 2015). Then, in May 2017, the Ministry of Transportation issued a regulation reinforcing stipulations in Law No. 9/1998 on the Freedom

[1] The Secretary General of ASPEK Indonesia made a similar observation about the level of cooperation and impact of these appointments in a separate interview conducted in the same month.

[2] Officials from several other unions, large and small, confirmed this assessment. According to one, "Now we are so constricted in where we can protest – it's been hard under Jokowi" (Interview, May 2017). According to another, "We'd never been blocked from the state palace on May Day. Jokowi is more repressive" (Interview, June 2017).

[3] The initiative reportedly emerged from discussions with officials from the Coordinating Ministry for Political, Legal and Security Affairs (Elyda 2015). In the face of heated opposition, Ahok revised the regulation just three weeks later (Budiari 2015).

to Express Opinion in Public restricting the public expression of opinion near the presidential palace, places of worship, military installations, hospitals, transport hubs, and locations with vital object status (Gumiwang 2017). These attacks on freedom of association did not stop unions from mobilizing, but they made organized labor's most effective tactic riskier and more difficult.

The government also took steps to limit unions' ability to stage demonstrations in companies and industrial parks by expanding the availability of "vital object" status. Originally put in place by Megawati to manage terrorist threats, Presidential Decision No. 63/2004 on Securing National Vital Objects had been extended during the Yudhoyono years to cover selected industrial parks and factories by Ministerial Decision No. 620/M-IND/Kep/12/2012. Jokowi reinforced this decision through Government Regulation No. 2/2017 on the Development of Industrial Infrastructure and by increasing the number of industrial facilities identified as industrial vital objects. Initially, ten industrial parks and thirty-eight corporations/factories had been granted this status. By February 2018, that number had grown to nineteen industrial parks and seventy-two companies (Siregar 2018). Although strike action was still permitted under the policy, it banned demonstrations and facilitated military involvement in actions against "threats and/or disturbances." The scope for military involvement in the handling of industrial disputes was expanded in 2018 with the signing of an MOU between the police and the army on security and public order, which explicitly mentioned a role for the military in handling demonstrations and strikes (*Kumparan News,* 2 February 2018).

The third element in the government's strategy to bring the unions to their knees came in the form of Government Regulation No. 78/2015 on Wages, which required that minimum wages be set strictly on a formula based on inflation and economic growth. In doing so, the regulation effectively recentralized the wage councils, undercutting unions' capacity to pressure local government officials to support large increases in the minimum wage. Recognizing the seriousness of the threat to their power, even some unions that had backed Jokowi mobilized against the regulation – indeed, since the policy had been implemented through a government regulation rather than through legislation, they had no other avenue through which to pursue change. Protests peaked on 30 October 2015, when thousands of workers threatened to stay the night outside the presidential palace in Jakarta unless the regulation was repealed (Siswanto and Hidayat 2015).

In addition to staging demonstrations targeting policy-makers in Jakarta, unions attempted to secure a judicial review of the regulation, but the Supreme Court rejected the case on the grounds that it would conflict with an ongoing review of an article of Law No. 13/2003 on Manpower.[4] Frustrated with a

[4] Stymied at the Supreme Court, they mounted challenges to minimum wages set for 2017 in local administrative courts – challenges that they won in Jakarta and Tangerang (*Koran Perdjoeangan*, 31 December 2017).

lack of progress, KSPI held a national action in some twenty provinces and 150 districts and cities in late September 2016 (*Kabar Buruh*, 19 September 2016). KSPSI and KASBI also staged protests calling on the governor of West Java to respect unions' role in the minimum wage-setting process (Masnurdiansyah 2016, Wiyono 2016), and promises to ignore the regulation featured prominently in their political contracts with gubernatorial candidates in 2017 and 2018. When some governors responded to labor's demands by approving wages that exceeded the mandated increase, Jokowi's administration issued a circular to governors threatening them with sanctions should they pass wages in excess of the national formula.[5]

Deeply disappointed with Government Regulation No. 78/2015, even union leaders who had previously remained silent on the presidential elections began encouraging their members to vote for Prabowo. Jokowi's refusal to rescind the controversial regulation left Andi Gani and other union leaders supporting his candidacy with little to convince their members to follow their lead. In the face of growing support for Prabowo in union-dense districts, Jokowi made an abrupt about-turn just days before the 2019 election, pledging to revise it before thousands of KSPSI members gathered in Bandung district (Fakhri 2019). Just two weeks later, after early poll returns showed Jokowi had trounced Prabowo, he invited the leaders of all major unions, including Said Iqbal, to the presidential palace on May Day, where he reaffirmed this commitment (*Merdeka*, 1 May 2019). The fact that both presidential candidates had actively wooed organized labor attests to the depth of the transformation of the labor movement since 1998.

Despite the setbacks experienced in the first Jokowi term, then, organized labor had consolidated its position in Indonesia's democracy. Perhaps fearful of a repeat of the social security campaign, when unions collaborated with sympathetic legislators willing to oppose the government, Jokowi's government limited its attacks on workers' conditions to executive orders rather than attempting to push for amendments to core labor legislation. And, although unions had been disappointed by Jokowi's attack on minimum wage-setting institutions, the formula based on GDP growth and inflation has resulted in fairly substantial wage increases, and employers have consequently begun to complain about the new system (Caraway, Ford, and Nguyen 2019). In addition, governors in key provinces including Banten, East Java, and Jakarta had either defied the central government or found ways to compensate unionists by offering workers alternative benefits that would partially offset the lower wage increases. Despite the government's best efforts to curb unions' political influence at the subnational level, unions have found ways to undercut them. Although unions' attempts to infiltrate the legislature have been less successful, union-backed candidates nevertheless won seats in several local

[5] Circular 561/7721/SJ on the Evaluation of Minimum Wage-setting in 2017 and Preparations for Minimum Wage-setting for 2018.

contests in 2019. Significantly, Obon Tabroni was also elected to the national legislature, outpolling all other candidates in the industrial heartland of Bekasi.

LESSONS FROM INDONESIA

In contrast to other countries in East and Southeast Asia, where labor's influence and power waned after the end of authoritarian rule, the Indonesian labor movement remained on an upward trajectory in the two decades after the country transitioned to democracy. Once a tool of worker containment, unions not only established themselves as a legitimate voice in the political arena but also forced power-holders to respond to their demands. Despite its small size and many ongoing challenges, the labor movement is undoubtedly stronger than during the early post-Suharto period, and has become an increasingly sophisticated and prominent actor on the public stage.

Lessons from the Indonesian experience draw into question a number of accepted truths in contemporary labor studies and offer valuable insights about the conditions under which seemingly organizationally weak labor movements can chart alternative pathways to advance a labor agenda. The first of these lessons is that classic measures of organizational power are not the only factors that allow labor movements to advance a pro-labor agenda. Geographical concentration around Jakarta compensated for low density nationwide, allowing unions to unite in the streets to block reforms that they opposed and to advance legislation that they supported. At the local level, new industrial relations institutions also encouraged unions to cooperate across organizational divides. The most important among them were the wage councils, which provided strong incentives for Indonesia's divided unions to forge cross-organizational networks. This not only helped unions to win substantial wage increases but were central in advancing a labor agenda at the subnational level. Despite high levels of fragmentation, unions developed strong habits of cooperation at the local level, and sometimes at the national level as well. These features of Indonesia's political geography and industrial relations systems helped unions to mobilize thousands of their members on the streets to demand pro-labor policies from both local and national governments.

The broader regime context was also significant in giving Indonesia's unions the political space to engage in street politics – the decisive tactic through which unions shaped public policy. Labor movements in the Philippines and South Korea were less successful than Indonesian unions in securing pro-labor policies in part because they faced a much more hostile political climate. In many ways, unions in these countries were on a stronger footing than Indonesia's labor movement at the moment of regime change as a result of their high levels of mobilization in the transition period. But these early mobilizations generated a strong backlash that narrowed the space for street politics and labor organizing. In the Philippines, the Aquino administration,

which had initially responded positively to some of labor's demands, soon turned to the right. Labor activists who had come out against her government were caught up in a wider net of violence that targeted leftists (Hutchison 2015, West 1977). Local governments cracked down on labor, using state administrative and security organs to deter organizing efforts, while private actors intimidated and murdered labor activists with impunity (Sidel 1998). In South Korea, conservative anti-labor governments not only delayed rolling back labor laws that restrained collective labor rights, but also sided with employers in negotiations over labor reforms, harassed the militant Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, and arrested and jailed thousands of trade unionists (Koo 2000, Lee 2011, Shin 2010, Song 1999). Successive Indonesian governments – even Jokowi's – were not so hostile to labor. And because Suharto had centralized power so effectively, the national government had a virtual monopoly on the use of force, resulting in comparatively lower levels of extrajudicial violence against trade unionists. Street politics would have been a far costlier tactic if the labor movement had confronted more intense repression. But no labor leaders were murdered and relatively few unionists were arrested when Indonesia's unions took to the streets.

Indonesia's broader regime context not only resulted in lower levels of repression but also made governments more amenable to signing onto elements of labor's agenda. The hostility of governing parties to workers' interests is often a major roadblock to passing pro-labor reforms. Where unions have been relatively successful in securing relatively pro-worker labor reforms in the region – Taiwan – these positive outcomes have been attributed to the close relationship that unions had to the country's two dominant political parties; where they were less successful – South Korea – the lack of these connections is a primary reason provided for the less favorable labor reforms (Lee 2011). In Indonesia, unions also lacked institutionalized ties to political parties, and none of the major parties had a programmatic pro-labor orientation. But there were no overtly anti-labor parties, and legislators and executive candidates were in fact surprisingly responsive to labor's demands. When they mustered sufficient numbers in the streets, Indonesia's labor movement proved that they could convince politicians to support a labor agenda.

In addition to a relatively favorable regime context, the Indonesian labor movement was also fortunate in that decentralization opened up opportunities for unions to shape local policy in the country's industrial heartlands. Indonesia's local wage councils operated as collective bargaining institutions mediated by the state. As such, they provided an avenue for setting wages that depended not on their power in the workplace but on their capacity to influence local governments. When direct elections for local executives commenced, local networks of unions leveraged electoral contests to wrest wage concessions from aspiring candidates. Other democracies in the region have also decentralized some government functions and hold elections for local executives, but none have wage councils that provide electoral incentives for

local executives to cultivate labor's support. In the Philippines, which has the closest analog to Indonesia's wage councils, the seventeen regional boards that set minimum wages do not correspond to electoral jurisdictions. Consequently, membership on the boards is not determined by elected local governments: bureaucrats are appointed from central agencies, serve on the regional wage boards, and hold the decisive votes on them.[6] The wage councils were crucial in helping Indonesia's labor movement to compensate for its weakness in collective bargaining, a characteristic it shares with unions in the Philippines and Taiwan (Hutchison 2015, Lee 2011).[7] By harnessing the wage councils, unions secured wage gains that would have been inconceivable in a bipartite setting – and they did so by overtly politicizing them and thereby persuading local governments to side with them, and not employers, in wage negotiations.

Finally, the unusual trajectory of Indonesia's labor movement reveals an alternative path for expanding labor's influence in democracies. This path is not quite characteristic of social movement unionism – but also not traditional unionism in which collective bargaining on the shop floor is the basis of union power, or conventional political unionism in which labor hitches its wagon to a political party. Social movement unionism emerged as a theoretical lens for analyzing the path followed by some labor movements in the late 1980s by the subset of unions in Brazil, the Philippines, Poland, and South Africa, which were most engaged in opposing authoritarianism.[8] These unions combined democratic workplace organizations with social movement tactics, broadened their concerns beyond the workplace, and forged alliances with other organizations to demand regime change (Ost 1990, Scipes 1996, Seidman 1994, Webster 1988).[9] Neither economic unionism nor political unionism, "social movement unionism" became more than a concept that encapsulated key features of these labor movements – it was a prescription for union revitalization in a world increasingly hostile to old ways of organizing (Moody 1997, Munck 2000, Waterman 1993).

[6] There are eighty-one provinces in the Philippines. Provincial governors are directly elected but hold no authority over setting minimum wages.

[7] In South Korea, unions in the gigantic chaebols used massive strikes to shift the balance of power on the shop floor in their favor during the early transition years, so collective bargaining institutions have been comparatively stronger there, at least in large firms (Koo 2000).

[8] Some scholars include South Korea, but we follow Koo (2001), who argues that unions only mobilized after the transition began, and that links to community organizations were tenuous. He considers the South Korean labor movement to have more in common with economic unionism.

[9] Some disagreement exists about the precise definition of social movement unionism. Scipes (2014), for example, argues that its goal must be to transform society or challenge the state. Other scholars place more emphasis on grassroots organizing, social movement tactics, attention to issues beyond the workplace, and alliances with community groups. More recently, Nowak (2017) has called for a "new" social movement unionism to capture more localized struggles in which independent unions without linkages to political parties ally with non-labor groups at the local level.

Of course, the militant labor movements that emerge during democratic transitions never fit squarely in the categories of social movement unionism, political unionism, or economic unionism. As Pillay (2013, 15) has observed, "In concrete cases, unions usually display elements of two or more types or sub-types at any given period, with one type being dominant." But Indonesia's labor movement is not merely a blend of these categories, it is distinctive. Unlike social movement unions, Indonesia's unions are not well-known for their democratic workplace structures. They have broadened their concerns beyond the workplace, but their tenuous, ad hoc alliances with other social movement organizations have also not been a defining feature of their activities. Too weak in the workplace to depend on traditional unionism to make gains through collective bargaining and, while profoundly politicized, lacking party links, Indonesia's labor movement is also not characterized entirely by economic or political unionism. It is thus better conceptualized as a network of unions that have coalesced into a social movement: a sustained form of contentious politics, in which actors make claims bearing on other actors' interest, coordinate their efforts to advocate for shared interests or programs, make demands on the state, and utilize repertoires of collective action to achieve them (Tilly and Tarrow 2015). The associational power of each individual union is small and, as political outsiders, their institutionalized access to the political system is minimal. But they have multiplied their associational power through their networks, which have facilitated cooperation in achieving shared goals.

It is this networked power – combined with unions' outsider status and weakness in the workplace – that underpins the Indonesian labor movement's social movement character. This social movement character, in turn, helps to explain why its achievements have extended beyond a single workplace, employer, or industry and benefited workers regardless of whether they belong to a union, and all citizens, in the case of universal healthcare. In much the same way that India's informal sector workers used the power of their votes to wrest stronger welfare protections from state governments (Agarwala 2013), Indonesia's unions have stitched together a creative set of tactics to influence local and national governments through their power in the streets *and* the promise of their votes on election day. This dynamic, public-facing labor movement demonstrates that unions, even when seemingly weak, can act to advance the economic and political interests of workers despite the increasingly difficult circumstances that confront organized labor around the world.

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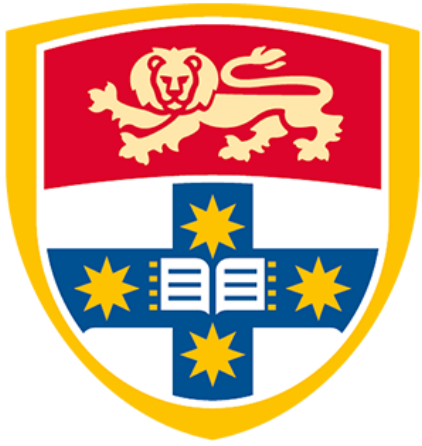

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